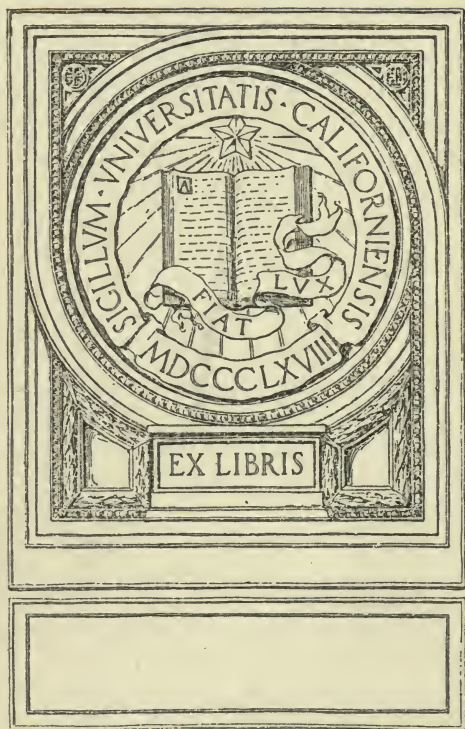


# THE GREAT REIGN



20/10/22



## **THE GREAT REIGN**



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# THE GREAT REIGN

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

*"Semper ego auditor tantum  
nunquamne reponam?"*

JUVENAL

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LONDON, W.1

DA562  
G8

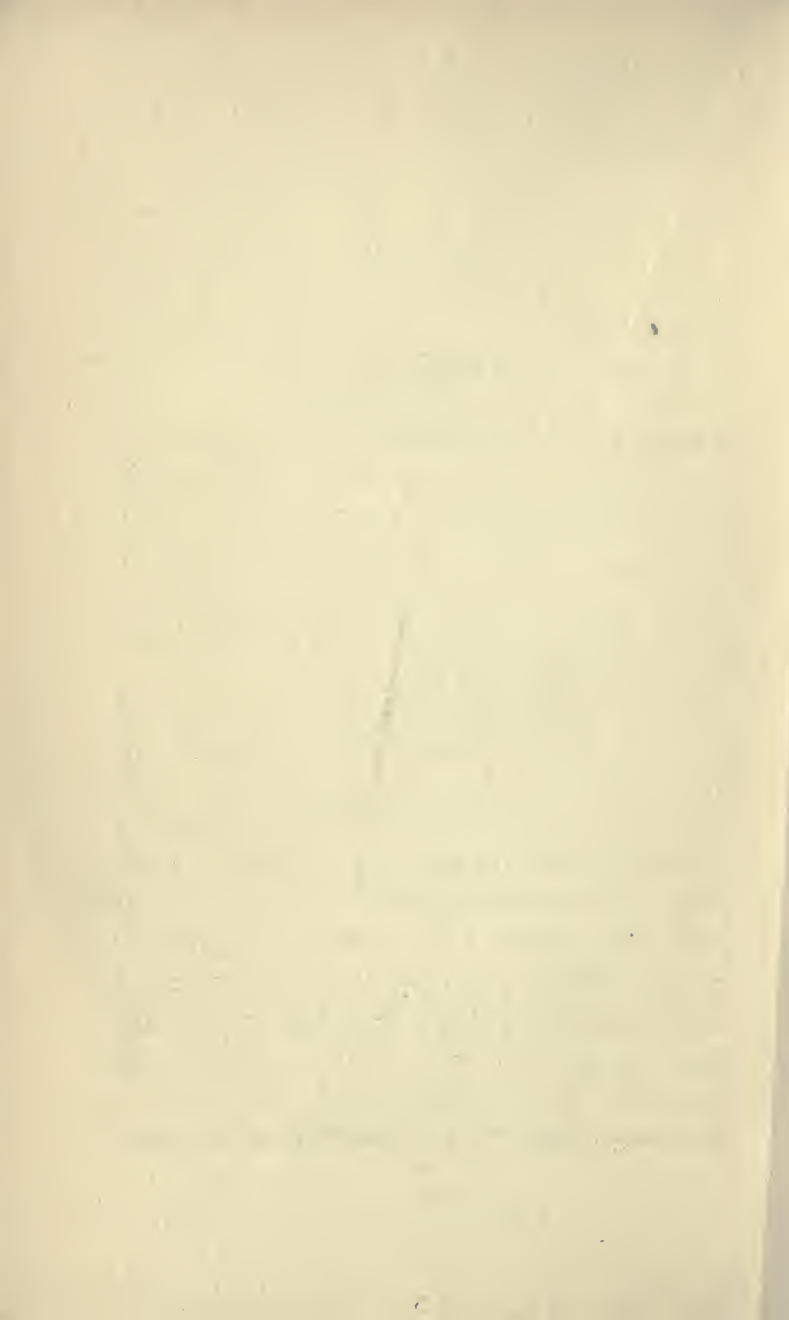
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## PREFACE

A MAN may look around him with distaste for the present poor ideals of life, with disgust at the lack of principle in public affairs, with contempt for the impertinent pranks of cubist and paulo post futurists, and with sorrow for the loss of all reverence for anything, and still hold his peace.

He who has seen the augustan age of England, with statesmen striving honourably for the public good according to their varying opinions honestly entertained, holding to principles with integrity, regardless of self-interest; who has seen the whole "body politic composed of all sorts and degrees of people," united in universal respect for order and obedience to law; who has seen things beautiful and of good report accorded the reverence that is their due; and who has witnessed the noble achievements of great

men now dead in all fields of human endeavour, may retire in silence to his fireside and watch with helpless regret the surrounding decay of taste and decadence of conduct.

But if to the absence of the ancient amenities and noble achievements and pure ideals there is added the aggravation of a studied detraction of, and the insult of a calculated contempt for, those ideals and achievements, from the lips and pens of young men whose pertness passes for perspicuity and whose sauciness is mistaken for wit, it is time someone who knew England as it was in those great days should break silence, and tell the rising generation something of those splendid times and of those illustrious men as he saw them face to face.

History ultimately puts every man in his proper place, and when these tumultuous times shall have passed away and mature judgment shall have opportunity to be heard, the great Victorians will, I know, be restored to universal honour, and their hoity-toity detractors will be forgotten.

If I shall have done anything in this book, however trifling, to hasten this vindication, my utmost pleasure and pride will be satisfied.



# THE GREAT REIGN

## CHAPTER I

### TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY.

To depreciate the Victorian period and belittle the men who adorned it has long been the diversion of the clever young gentlemen of the present day who write reviews and biographies for us.

I am sure their performances are based less on feelings of ill nature towards those they deride than on a genial desire to aggrandise, not themselves, but each other. Moreover, the very circumstances of art and letters in the twentieth century render it imperative to every critic either to condemn those hailed to-day as masters or to dismiss the great men of the last century with a condescending smile. For how is it possible to accept elegant prose printed in lines that

do not regularly reach the margin of the page as the last and best example of poetry without condemning the adherence to prosody observed by all the Victorians as a needless concomitant of that form of expression? Or how can parallelograms and rhombs be claimed to be the most appropriate vehicles to represent the human form without pronouncing Frank Holl to be a painter wholly without proper vision and perception? But divergencies of judgment in letters and art are always present in every age, and may be left to the arbitrament of Time without any useless heart-burnings.

The young writers of to-day may possibly know better about the obligations of prosody than all the poets from Homer to Tennyson; and the rhomboidal draughtsmen may have clearer perceptions of the human body than all the painters from Michael Angelo to Watts; but I regard with discomfort and regret the general tendency of the writers of to-day to depress the characters of those who illumined the age of Victoria.

“Do not feel any necessity to admire the reputed great men of the last century,” in

effect writes one clever young gentleman. "I will show you that they were often frauds and sometimes contemptible. All the motives of a certain Cardinal were small and ignoble ; a certain headmaster of a great school who was reputed to have influenced for good a vast number of the youth of the country was really a very narrow-minded, pompous, and rather ridiculous person ; and a certain soldier idolised by the public for his stainless life and heroic death was, as a fact, nothing but a frenzied enthusiast addicted to drunkenness."

The detraction is not, of course, thus simply and openly set down, but it is insinuated between the covers of the volume with great dexterity. It is very clever, and if this writer continues so to treat all the famous men of the Victorian age he will leave us no single character that we can respect, much less reverence, in the whole galaxy. I attribute to him and others like him no deliberate malice ; they have been born without the capacity for reverence for anything or anybody. They delicately mock the dead who cannot reply. I do not think

they much help the living with such activities.

It is not constructive or helpful to us to tell us, or to insinuate subtly, that one of the greatest statesmen of that age entertained himself on his way home from the House of Commons on dark nights by holding long discourses with abandoned women in the streets. Thus is the half-truth promulgated which is worse than a falsehood. I am sure the writer who thus sullies a great reputation and his own is not aware that that great man and his devoted wife throughout their long lives spent much of their benevolent energies in efforts to assist and restore to normal life those poor victims of an incontinent civilisation.

It may be appraised to the credit or discredit of these writers that, having been born too late to know personally the men they depreciate, they find it interesting and diverting to adopt a habit of iconoclasm. It is so dull to join in a chorus of praise, and they find skittles a more interesting amusement than bowls.

To myself one of the best consolations of

mature age is that my memory is enriched by years of intercourse face to face with many of the men who conferred a splendour to their times.

I propose, therefore, to recount briefly, and I hope without vanity, such incidents and friendships as may bear witness to the happy urbanity of the society of those despised Victorian days, and to the magnanimity and conspicuous virtue of many of those illustrious figures — poets, statesmen, philosophers, painters, and men of letters—all animated with a common desire to build up a social order permeated throughout by beauty and nobility.

A few pleasing accidents and occurrences in my own long life I shall take leave to recount, but not to indulge a conceit that would require my name attached to them to satisfy ; and as regards others, I shall confine myself almost exclusively to the relation of what I know by personal acquaintance.

There are, I take leave to think, still many kindly Englishmen who do not enjoy the prevalent association of great names with any small items of scandal or gossip that can

belittle them. It is not difficult to make the most noble of men appear commonplace if you describe him cutting his nails in his bedroom.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY DAYS IN AN ENGLISH HOME

MY father, who shall be as nameless as myself in these retrospections, was a man of high position, adequate wealth, fine scholarship, and delicate taste, with a wide circle of friendships among the distinguished men of his age. Himself the son of a scholar, who, in his day, had swept the University of its choicest honours, who had held a unique position in his county as representing the best culture of his times, and who had received as guests in his home many men famous in the world of letters, my father from his youth up had associated with many of the finest intellects in England, and in his turn found himself on terms of intimacy with the next generation of statesmen, artists, and writers of the greatest Victorian period.

Dwelling for many years under his roof as

“son of the house,” it was my privilege to enjoy the kindly civilities of my father’s celebrated friends, and to observe at close quarters their true characters.

When my father was no more, I continued to enjoy, without deserving it, the friendship of those illustrious men in the great galaxy that still survived, which they extended to me generously, more in memory of him than for any deserts of my own ; and now, having myself lived well into the autumn of life, I have to congratulate myself that by some happy accident I have been permitted to form friendships as I passed along the years with many of those most distinguished in my own day. In these happy circumstances it may perhaps be of some slight passing interest to a few who have leisure for such things if I set down for them something of my memory of those I have counted among my friends before the pen finally falls from my hand.

When I came back from Cambridge I had already read the English poets from John Skelton to Tennyson, and was sufficiently well informed to browse with profit along the shelves of my father’s splendid library and

to learn much by leading him to open to me the treasures of his storied learning.

It has always been my belief that to live with cultivated people is the finest of all possible educations for the young—or, indeed, for those of any age—and, to my good fortune, it was always a pleasure to my father to impart to me the results of his own wide reading.

Among the frequenters of the house was Sir William Boxall, for many years the director of the National Gallery, himself a finished portrait painter, and from him I learnt a right taste in the fine arts in my youth; and in later life it was my great happiness to be on terms of intimacy with Leighton and Watts and other Victorian painters, which has preserved me from following the strange school that has since arisen, which regards ugliness as a sign of power, and beauty as a manifestation of weakness.

As regards both art and letters, therefore, I had the inestimable advantage of assimilating right taste and knowledge, from those with whom I lived and associated, without conscious effort.

To live with a man of letters and a man of taste who was also a man of the world and the possessor of a splendid library conferred upon me great advantages in my youth, and I hardly realised the boon of such a position till it was lost and I found myself wandering among my comparatively slender collection of books, looking in vain for that kindly help and sympathy that had never failed me.

No doubt a library is ever a solace to the intellectual loneliness of a solitary reader, but it can be an earthly Paradise where two congenial lovers of letters live together to range its shelves and commune with the immortals in company. The chief delight in beauty is lost if there is none to share it. With most of us this is a universal truth—true of the beauty of the natural world about us ; true of the glories of art ; true of the splendours of literature. Through fields of amaranth and asphodel I now wander alone, and the hand that once guided me can never be replaced.

## CHAPTER III

### AMENITIES OF HOSPITALITY

LIFE in London in my youth had a charm and quiet refinement that has long disappeared. Those who entertained their friends invited them to their own houses instead of paying for their meals at a restaurant. The modern habit of asking people to dine with their host in a glaring public coffee-room and to have their bill paid for them can never take the place of true hospitality.

In the seventies it was my father's custom to collect at his table about once a fortnight throughout the season persons distinguished in all walks of intellectual life. I well remember my youthful ideas of propriety being quite startled at the appearance of John Bright at a dinner party at home in a black velvet coat edged with broad braid. He had

a fine leonine head, but was small of stature, and after dinner, when sitting on a large sofa between my father and Archbishop Tait, he looked half buried ! He had not a winning or easy manner, and his mouth, going down at the corners, gave him a rather discontented look, but his general aspect was strong and fine.

The Archbishop was a very beautiful person, with long flowing hair having a natural curl in it. I have often heard him speak in the House of Lords, when the suave dexterity with which he skirted difficult subjects and avoided committing himself to any attitude that might mean something too definite was remarkable. Now and then, however, he would feel safe, and stand firmly for or against some measure, on which occasions something uncomfortable often happened.

Once, when I was listening in the place where I am entitled to stand during debates in the Lords, Archbishop Tait ventured forth in full panoply, with crosier almost visibly held aloft, to attack the proposal for opening museums on Sundays. No sooner had he

sat down than Lord Rosebery, then quite a young man, well under thirty, rose from the cross benches and delivered a most witty and exquisitely phrased speech, twitting the Archbishop with defending *ex cathedra* the monopoly of the public house as the sole possible place of entertainment for the people on Sunday. The discomfort of the Archbishop under this delightful banter was very manifest as decorous mirth rustled through the House. Nevertheless, if I rightly remember, the Archbishop and the publicans remained ultimate masters of the field.

Many years after this when I was talking to Sir Herbert Tree about this scene in the House of Lords, he, with his bright wit, alluded to the clergy as "the gentlemen in black under whose cassocks may be observed the aprons of the licensed victuallers."

The record of the performances of the bishops in the House of Lords is a very sad and disappointing one. I once spent two days at the British Museum tracing out in Hansard their action in the House throughout the long struggles to abolish the slave trade,

and to emancipate the slaves in our colonies. One bishop, the prelate of Durham of those days, boldly spoke out and voted against both the trade and the institution of slavery. The others flocked down and gave silent and solid votes on the other side. And in all the many splendid fights against cruelty of every kind, from bear-baiting and cock-fighting to vivisectioning dogs and starving and torturing little children, the crusade has always been initiated and carried on by laymen and non-conformists without the countenance or assistance of the Church of England in its corporate capacity, and with the help only of a few individual clergymen, though they have always been the most distinguished. Sir Arthur Helps once said that he had listened to sermons all his life but had never once heard a clergyman preach on the duty of avoiding cruelty to animals.

“Conduct,” said Matthew Arnold, “is three-fourths of life,” and cruelty to children and animals is a vile piece of conduct quite prevalent all about us and surely not unworthy the attention of the Church. In these matters my father and Lord Shaftesbury

saw eye to eye, and I learnt from them to abhor all forms of cruelty.

When my father gave his dinner parties about twenty-four sat down to dinner, but afterwards the large drawing-rooms were filled with those invited to come in the evening. I think some fifty or sixty comfortably filled the rooms, which, with the conservatory, were beautifully lighted with innumerable wax candles. This afforded a pleasant and easy opportunity for the forming of acquaintances and the cementing of friendships, the people brought together being chosen carefully, with the intention of promoting sympathetic conjunctions of persons of like tastes, anything likely to cause a jar being rigidly avoided. In this my father's idea of the right amenities of entertainment differed very widely from that of a well-known hostess who flourished tropically in the eighties and nineties in Mayfair. If she could bring into juxtaposition at her table Mr. Bradlaugh and a bishop she imagined that she had achieved a notable triumph. Of course it was exciting, but occasionally it led to a catastrophe.

On one occasion, when I was myself a

guest, I found already discoursing in the drawing-room the caustic yet genial Labouchere, in whose paper, *Truth*, a certain Lord Chancellor was frequently attacked with smart asperity for acts of nepotism in distributing his patronage. Presently the same Lord Chancellor was announced. He advanced a little way into the room, caught sight of the lively owner of *Truth*, turned on his heel, and went down and out of the house without greeting or even noticing his over-enterprising hostess.

Mr. Browning, the poet, rescued the situation by continuing without pause or inflexion the remarks he was addressing to two or three of us standing round him.

Somewhere in the far East End, near the docks, there thrived in those days a man with a zoological emporium, where one could purchase a lion, or an ape, or a kangaroo, or a boa-constrictor, and his name was transferred by the wits to this lady's house. It must be admitted that we all, whether we were apes or lions, were quite ready to accept her invitations and meet the other specimens of the menagerie, and, indeed, it may very

well be that a sudden enforced contiguity between persons publicly at enmity may sometimes lead each of them to take a kindlier view of the other, and so tend to the assuaging of bitterness and the advancement of charity.

My father, however, directed his efforts to the quite different object of bringing those together at his table in London or in his house in the country who, he judged, would be desirous to meet each other; and so anxious was my father to protect his guests from the slightest discomfort or jolt that on certain occasions, when the venerable and saintly Cardinal Newman came to stay, no one was invited to the house while he was there except by the Cardinal's own desire.

No doubt the lady in Mayfair conducted more spectacular and dramatic entertainments at her house than did my father, but his methods conduced to great urbanity, smoothness, and what Matthew Arnold described as "sweetness and light"; and I think that the famous guests were seen at their best in surroundings that they felt to be completely congenial, where fellow guests

were full of sympathy and good will to one another. Such an atmosphere frequently led to the most interesting discourse between persons who in other circumstances would seldom relax their habitual reserve.

Among his friends my father counted many persons skilled in the art and execution of music, and they not seldom enjoyed his hospitality. Joachim and Jenny Lind I have heard play and sing after dining with us. Of course my father never asked them to perform, not wishing them to imagine for a moment that they were included among the guests merely to entertain them, but I think, when they discovered that he would not ask them, they liked to volunteer, and the violin and music were discovered by good fortune to be in the hall !

At smaller gatherings of guests in the country the controversies of the day, now long ago faded into the past, were discussed with animation but unfailing courtesy. Such protagonists as Professor Shairp and Matthew Arnold would meet and discuss the former's *Culture and Religion* and the latter's *Literature and Dogma*, and to my thinking Matthew

Arnold generally had the best of the arguments ; but now, looking back through the mist of years from the levels of thought to which the world has now advanced, these disputations seem to have left nothing behind them but what Sir William Watson finely calls " the dust of vanished collisions."

## CHAPTER IV

### TRAVEL

BACON advises those who have travelled not to be "forward to tell stories." I have travelled much and far. I have been through the Straits of Magellan, under the falls of Niagara, and on the top of the Great Pyramid ; I have seen a great tempest at sea, and have watched the sun set in the Pacific from a peak in the Andes. I have sailed down the Danube ; I have approached Venice from the Adriatic ; I know Rome, Lisbon, and Paris, and Vienna. But also have I wandered often and lovingly over my own beloved country, and found it more beautiful and soul-satisfying than any other country or clime.

This precious stone set in the silver sea.

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.

A reverent pilgrim, I have seen every cathedral in England and Wales and have sat and mused in its nave.

The English cathedrals have a spirit all their own ; various and different though they are in detail, there is not one in which a man may sit alone and not feel stealing upon his heart the adoration of which they are the visible and compelling expression. The rising lines of the lovely fabric draw the eye of the beholder up, and ever upward, to the fretted vaulting, where the ribs of stone join and interlace like hands in prayer,

. . . where music dwells,  
Lingering, and wandering on, as loth to die ;

and often the steady beams of the sun are transfigured as they shine

Among the lily wings of angels, or the purple robes of  
kings,  
Or the sad eyes of saints by a wild world disowned.

Under the blessed peace and glory of such shrines even a broken heart may feel the hand of consolation laid upon it, and

The soul that grieves the most might rest from grief.

Not long ago my little grandson of six years old first went into a cathedral—that of

Salisbury—and heard the service from the end of the long nave. As I drove him away afterwards in my motor-car, I, who had not accompanied him, asked him what he thought of the cathedral, and he replied with perfect simplicity, “Oh, I heard an angel singing.” Thus did his young soul respond to the blessed and lovely influence of that glorious building.

As we looked back over the plain, far away could still be seen that soaring spire pointing for ever to heaven, fulfilling its sole function of expressing aspiration.

They dreamt not of a perishable home  
Who thus could build !

Modern buildings, even the finest of them, when not frank imitations of the ancient forms, express very sadly the modern mind.

In the Imperial Institute we find the expression of no lively faith, of no benign philosophy, of no fatalism, of no fear, such as are manifested in the Gothic, the Greek, the Mohammedan, and the Egyptian architecture. A sense of faded memories of each and all pervades the melancholy edifice, and as we gaze upon it there seems

to fall upon the ear a confusion of pathetic echoes. Is not this the mirror of the mind of a builder in a faithless world? Beautiful it may be, but full of infinite sadness.

It would appear that the architect, unconscious of the exposure of his soul, stands ever self-revealed. Something there is within him, not himself, that guides his hand when he builds to trace the station of his mind as he broods on the mystery of his being. He is an automaton, as is the bee that builds its cells in hexagons, unconsciously fulfilling the behest of the Power that ordains the glorious order of the world.

Very terrible must it have been for those Egyptians of old who dwelt under the shadow of those terrible edifices. Vast and solemn and terrifying, they fill the eye of the traveller with an instant sense of overwhelming, unendurable weight. The terrific mass above has seemingly forced the supporting columns to bulge, and the very walls to spread apart at the base; and the awful perspective exposes the builder's soul watching, without hope and appalled, the inevitable advance of annihilation.

Travel fills the memory with images in the evening of life by the winter fireside, and to have seen strange peoples and distant lands softens prejudice and broadens judgment. But I have come towards the end of my days to love the flat meadows and gracious woods and streams around my home better than all the mountain scenery in the world. The majestic Alps and Andes, and the vast rivers and plains of the continents, are to be visited and experienced but not lived with, and to me the chief effect of travel has been to fill me with a boundless love of my own land and people, and to make me certain that it is here that I wish to live the rest of my life, and in this dear earth to be laid at last.

## CHAPTER V

### CARDINAL MANNING

I HAVE read Mr. Strachey's book on some eminent Victorians and I have wondered whether it will do any good in the world. It is very clever, but I cannot doubt that its object is to depress the reputations of those with whom it deals. Its cleverness lies in the skill with which the steady drip of depreciation flows from a pen that appears to be held by the hand of candour and honesty. Yet as one reads further and further into the book one becomes conscious of an uncomfortable feeling that malice may perhaps be the ultimate motive of the writer. I do not wish to impute such a motive. I would rather believe that Mr. Strachey has set out to aggrandise his own generation at the expense of the last. He and his bright young companions are impatient, perhaps,

at the refusal of the mass of mankind to accept them as at all of the same magnitude as the galaxy that adorned the last century. They are perhaps charged to find that the world will not regard the versatile Mr. Wells as the equal of Ruskin or the bright Mr. Bennett as the rival of Matthew Arnold.

Whether Mr. Strachey really believes the entirely respectable Cardinal who now resides in Westminster deserves to be recognised as a greater figure than the illustrious Manning I take leave to doubt. Perhaps he is merely enjoying the excitement of the iconoclast, as a high-spirited youth breaks precious things just for the fun of it.

I suppose there is no statesman, or philanthropist, or poet, or philosopher, or even saint, whose reputation could not be damaged by a biographer or essayist who passed lightly and cynically over all the good and great work done by him, and concentrated attention with skilful candour upon the blots and blemishes discoverable by a penetrating scrutiny in the life of anyone who is mortal. It is even conceivable that injury might be

done to the faith of many Christians if a life of Christ were written by an able man passing over with faint appreciation the stainless magnificence of the Redeemer's life and concentrating attention with much appearance of fairness and accuracy upon the incidents of the destruction of the herd of swine and the cursing of the fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of its proper season.

Cardinal Manning, like many another great and good man, was not faultless throughout a long and, for the most part, a struggling life. But the impression left by him upon his contemporaries was something very different from that left upon those of the present day who read Mr. Strachey's book.

Of course, I may be entirely wrong, but I feel as certain as I can be of anything dependent upon literature that Mr. Strachey did not know Cardinal Manning personally. I myself had that privilege—and a privilege it was—and I am sure the splendid reputation he enjoyed throughout his Cardinalate was nobly earned. Mr. Strachey, aware that Manning, when he was Archdeacon of

Chichester, had visited Rome and seen the Pope three years before he joined the Roman Catholic Church, will not let us believe that his conscience had as much to do with his conversion as his anticipation of benefits he would consequently receive, and invents a conversation at the Vatican in which he makes the Pope say: "Ah! dear Signor Manning, why don't you come over to us? Do you suppose that we should not look after you?" And this expectation of benefits to come is suggested to us as the real motive that influenced Manning to join the Roman Communion. After this I should think we must all fervently pray to be spared, when we are dead and gone, the biographical activities of Mr. Strachey. I wonder where Mr. Strachey found any authority but his own lively imagination for a picture of the venerable Cardinal in his old age frequenting "Mayfair drawing-rooms where fashionable ladies knelt to the Prince of the Church." That was the last place in which to find the Cardinal; those who wanted him had to go to his austere dwelling at Westminster; he did not run about Mayfair haunting the

drawing-rooms of the fashionable. A man does not fill the place in the world indubitably occupied by Cardinal Manning by frequenting fashionable drawing-rooms. He achieved his station in public regard by the power of his character, by the wide-minded and generous vision that he brought to affairs of state, by his implacable adherence to principle, by the severe self-denial of his private life, by his convincing eloquence, and by the nobility of his presence.

A man of means, the son of an opulent merchant who was one of the governors of the Bank of England, he cared so little for the gauds of this world that when he died his total worldly wealth amounted to sixty-eight pounds.

Once, when I was with him in his house at Westminster, I noticed upon the wall an elevation of the proposed Roman Catholic Cathedral—a Gothic structure with no resemblance to the edifice finally erected—and when I asked him when he proposed to begin building it he said, “When I have no more poor to look after.”

His asceticism was extreme. There were

occasions when he would accept an invitation to dine at my father's house for the purpose of meeting some particular person, and it was his habit to sit at the table and eat nothing at all. But no notice was taken of his refusal of each course, and I think sometimes other guests did not observe his abstinence.

If he thought a cause worthy and right, no prejudices or reservations restrained him in his enthusiasm in its support. I have seen him at a public meeting stand on the platform side by side with Lord Shaftesbury, who represented the party in the Church of England most remote in its doctrine from the Roman faith. He was a splendid figure in the public life of England, and the best reply to the suggestions that the real motive of his life was personal aggrandisement is that at the death of Pius IX. he might have succeeded to the Papal throne, but refused the dazzling offer.

What his fellow countrymen who knew him thought of him was shown when he went on his last journey to his grave. I do not remember so magnificent a spectacle at any

funeral in my life. The people of London of all classes and conditions thronged the route in hundreds of thousands to pay their last silent tribute to this great man.

## CHAPTER VI

### CARDINAL NEWMAN

CARDINAL NEWMAN has not as yet been thoroughly vivisected by Mr. Strachey's scalpel; Mr. Strachey has only subjected His Eminence to a contemptuous pity. I find it impossible to believe that this lively author can ever have been in Cardinal Newman's presence and then write of him as he has with complacent disdain. I do not, however, anticipate that the picture given us in *Eminent Victorians* of a weak, lachrymose ecclesiastic will easily be accepted by anyone who has taken the trouble to read the *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, which has been accepted throughout the civilised world as one of the most powerful polemical books ever written.

The directness and fierceness of onslaught staggered the Church of England and

annihilated Mr. Kingsley. "People say," he exclaimed, "that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is difficult to believe," and he goes on to declare that he cannot prove it, but adds, "Why should it not be? What's to hinder it? What do I know of substance or matter? Just as much as the greatest philosophers, and that is nothing at all"; and, forthwith carrying his battle-axe into the enemies' ranks, he tells them that the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is an article of the Anglican as well as of the Roman creed, and adds, "I know that my abstract idea of three is simply incompatible with my idea of one"; and forthwith he requires of his enemies an explanation of why they should attack him for believing in Transubstantiation while they themselves believe in the Trinity in Unity.

"Away with you, Mr. Kingsley, and fly into space," cries the wrathful Cardinal, and we may surmise that the hunting parson would have been glad if he could do so, and thereby escape any more applications of the Cardinal's flail! It does not do to call anybody, however insignificant, a liar and a

knave in public, but it was a very foolhardy thing for a sporting parson to throw rude insults at the head that contained one of the most powerful minds of the century. Mr. Kingsley was better fitted to write verses about foxhounds going to cover than to engage in disputations with a Cardinal about Transubstantiation.

As a writer Newman was undoubtedly far superior to Manning, though it is unfortunate that some of his most splendid passages of inspired prose lie buried deep in volumes of sermons; for sermons do not attract the general reader.

I did not come to know Cardinal Newman till he was advanced in life and had left far behind him the battles and combats in which he had shown himself so mortal an adversary.

The aspect he presented during the last ten years of his life, when I had the happiness often to be in his company, was that of one of the veritable saints of God. He was all that Manning was not. The one was a statesman fighting for his Church, and ready to come into any arena to do battle against the evils of the world; the other was a

blessed eremite who left the mending of a world that appalled him to an inscrutable Providence.

His chief concern was to make himself fit to join the communion of saints in the next world and to help others if possible to do the same. His features were unlovely, but they were transfigured with an expression that it is impossible adequately to describe. There was a settled wistfulness, and a look sometimes upon his countenance as of one who had been gazing at some glorious vision. When he entered a room he instantly produced a feeling that no one else in it mattered ; and this although his gentleness and humility were the most observable qualities about him immediately manifest.

I could never detect any trace of the mighty warrior who had once shaken Europe with his invincible pen. He had a sweet and delicate sense of humour, which played about, like summer lightning, in his talk, hurting nothing. He loved children, and it was touching to see him at the Zoological Gardens pulled by the hand from one cage to another by an ardent little boy, listening to his prattle

about the animals and birds, with sometimes, as he looked down benignly at his little companion, a glistening in his eye that I thought was an unshed tear.

The world has moved far away from those days, and as I look round about me in this twentieth century I see no figure, in the Roman Church or any other, with the halo of visible sanctity about it that encompassed as with a glory the bodily presence of John Henry, Cardinal Newman.

## CHAPTER VII

### RUSKIN

It is really superfluous to ask the scoffing neo-Georgians to bring into the lists any living writer who can produce with his pen English prose of magnificence comparable with that which Ruskin could command. They cannot answer such a challenge ; no name comes back from them in reply ; they are struck into a sudden silence.

There is one man living who has given the world a piece of noble prose, but he has no lot or part with the young barbarians of to-day, and, indeed, Sir William Watson, in his *Pencraft*, has used his lordly gift of language to reassert the need of law and order in letters, and to chastise the unruly company of anarchists who yield to-day no allegiance to prosody in poetry or form in prose ; moreover, the author of *Pencraft* has,

in his *Lacrymæ Musarum*, proclaimed himself irrevocably a loyal son of the Victorian age.

Throughout a long life Ruskin used his incomparable gift of expression always with a great moral purpose ; he used it to condemn everything evil and exalt everything good ; he used it to lead men away from everything ugly and towards everything that is beautiful ; he used it to defeat the modern blasphemy and inculcate the ancient reverence ; and as regards reverence, he maintained, as did every great Victorian, that all truly great work in the world has always been done in such a spirit. We have travelled far away from that fine precept in these days, and everyone now scoffs at everything—except himself.

I had the great privilege of enjoying the kindly and gracious friendship of Ruskin, though it was my part to learn and his to impart, and my attitude was more that of a sanguine pupil than of an equal. Surely never was there a man more ready to give, to any who would learn from him, everything he had, with both hands.

He would pour out the treasures of his stored learning and faultless taste to me

alone, as though I were a whole school of students, and when absent he thought it no trouble to write giving me wise advice in his wonderful and persuasive English.

He was quite unlike Carlyle, and their two styles were not more unlike than their characters. Carlyle had the appearance of wandering, a lost and burdened soul, in a mad and frantic world. Ruskin was like one who had long contemplated all the beauty of the world about him, seeing everywhere visions of loveliness, till his soul seemed already half in Paradise.

Now and then, but rarely, he unveiled a sense of delicate humour, as when a young girl painter-student in his drawing-room, after looking at a gorgeous Turner full of gold and glory, turned to him and said, "But, Mr. Ruskin, I have never really seen anything in the world like that picture." "No, my dear young lady," he replied, "but don't you wish you had?" And he went on to say that faithful reproduction of things seen is not ever the function of art, for, if it were, photography would fulfil that function and would be superior to any picture.

I am not learned in political economy, but many of us were glad to find Ruskin's penetrating observation led him to repudiate the flat-footed teaching of the then dominant school—that everyone will always do what is best for himself. “Not at all,” said Ruskin ; “many men's actions are guided by pure altruism” ; and certainly, though he did not allude to himself, much of his own life was thus guided and directed.

I once asked him to tell me about the causes that led him suddenly to resign the Slade Professorship of Fine Art at Oxford. He said that he had asked the University for a grant to build a well-lighted room for the purposes of his lectures on art, and that they replied that they were already in debt ; yet the very next year they proposed to vote £10,000 to erect a laboratory for Dr. Burdon Sanderson to use for experiments on live animals, together with £2,000 more for fitting it up with necessary instruments for the purpose. He thereupon resigned his professorship and wrote to the Vice-Chancellor asking him to read his letter of resignation to the convocation. The Vice-Chancellor, he said, never

read the letter as requested ; moreover, the editor of the *University Gazette* left a letter he sent him unpublished ; and, to crown the whole edifice of poltroonery, the *Pall Mall Gazette* actually announced that he resigned owing to his "advancing years." Thus the magnificent series of Ruskin's lectures was brought to a sudden termination.

I visited Oxford once to hear one of them on "The Art of England." The place was packed to the walls, and the whole audience sat wrapt in wonder as the enchanted periods of his matchless eloquence rose up and up to an inspired peroration.

The Convocation of Oxford preferred the physiologist, delving into dogs' entrails, to the radiant and visionary seer, and that voice of supreme nobility was silenced for ever in the University.

But time brings in its revenges, and the names of all those who drove Ruskin away have long sunk into oblivion, while to the end of the world the name of John Ruskin is revered in a million homes.

Towards the end of his life a veil fell over that lordly intellect, and the eyes that looked

out from Brantwood over Coniston Lake to the mountains at its head saw strange and unreal phantasmagoria. But the immortal part of him was already delivered to us in language that can never die, and his body now lies at peace in the little churchyard of Coniston, between the mountains and the lake—dust that has added another glory to that hallowed land of England's poets.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CARLYLE

FROUDE's life of Carlyle, for everyone of distinction in the world, has added a new terror to death. I have always believed that it was the perusal of that sinister book that induced Matthew Arnold to leave strict injunctions behind him that no one was to write his life.

Carlyle believed Froude to be his dear, kind, sympathetic, understanding, friend ! When I had finished Froude's book, I put on the fly-leaf at the end Canning's lines :

Give me the avowed, the erect, the manly foe  
Bold I can meet—perhaps may turn his blow !  
But of all plagues, good heaven, thy wrath can send,  
Save, save, oh, save me from the candid friend !

When somebody alluded in Carlyle's presence to the possibility of the Dean of Westminster being desirous that his, Carlyle's,

remains should lie in the Abbey the old man exclaimed, "Deliver me from that body-snatcher!" His body was not snatched for the Abbey, but lies at Ecclefechan, and I always turn aside down the cross-roads there to visit the grave when I motor to and from Scotland. It is a pity his immortal part was not delivered from the tender mercies of his "candid friend"!

My memory goes back to the shock produced on the public by the sudden death of Mrs. Carlyle, which occurred in her brougham as she was driving round Hyde Park. The grief that filled the remaining years of the self-tortured old man was pathetic in the extreme.

I cannot claim to have known him as a friend, having only been in his company once for about an hour. I remember that his aspect, clouded and heavy with thought and sorrow, was startlingly like the bust of Seneca at Naples, and that I reflected on the strange similarity between the two men, separated by nineteen hundred years and derived from far different races. The teaching of Carlyle, with the experience of modern

events, may not always carry the weight it did. Noble principles of conduct are advocated with burning eloquence in many splendid passages in *Sartor Resartus* and in the innumerable pamphlets which he addressed to mankind, but in view of the portent of recent Germany his passionate worship of sheer force, though accompanied by brutality and stained with dishonour, fails to-day to secure the adhesion of the wise and the good. Nevertheless, there remains manifest about Carlyle the quality of moral grandeur which distinguishes him as one of the great figures of the Victorian age, rendering insignificant any name or reputations of the present day when cited for comparison.

The following letters may have already been published, though I have not myself come across them in any record of Carlyle. Copies of them were sent by Carlyle to Lady Derby, who showed them to my father, and I copied them. They seem to me to reflect so much distinguished credit, both to Disraeli and to Carlyle, that at this distance of time it is no breach of confidence in giving them to the world.

*Confidential.*

BOURNEMOUTH,

*December 27th, 1874.*

SIR,

A Government should recognise intellect. It elevates and sustains the bone of a nation. But it is an office, which, adequately to fulfil, requires both courage and discrimination, as there is a chance of falling into favouritism, and patronising mediocrity, which instead of elevating the national feeling, would, eventually, degrade and debase it.

In recommending Her Majesty to fit out an Arctic expedition, and in suggesting other measures of that class, Her Government have shown their sympathy with Science.

I wish the position of High Letters should be equally acknowledged, but this is not so easy, because it is in the necessity of things that the test of merit cannot be so precise in literature as in Science.

When I consider the literary world, I see only two living names, which, I would fain believe, will be remembered: and they stand out in uncontested superiority. One

is that of a poet, if not a great poet, a real one : and the other is your own.

I have advised the Queen to offer to confer a Baronetcy on Mr. Tennyson, and the same distinction should be at your command, if you liked it. But I have remembered that, like myself, you are childless and may not care for hereditary honours.

I have therefore made up my mind, if agreeable to yourself, to recommend Her Majesty to confer on you the highest distinction for merit at Her command, and which, I believe, has never yet been conferred by Her, except for direct services to the State, and that is the Grand Cross of the Bath.

I will speak with frankness on another point. It is not well that in the sunset of life, you should be disturbed by common cares. I see no reason why a great author should not receive from the nation a pension, as well as a lawyer and statesman.

Unfortunately, the personal power of Her Majesty in this respect is limited, but still it is in the Queen's capacity to settle

on an individual an amount equal to a good fellowship, and which was cheerfully accepted and enjoyed by the great spirit of Johnson, and the pure integrity of Southey.

Have the kindness to let me know your feelings on these subjects.

I have the honour to remain,

Your faithful servant,

B. D'ISRAELI.

*[Copy of Carlyle's answer].*

*Private.*

5, CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA,

29th December, 1874.

SIR,

Yesterday, to my great surprise, I had the honour to receive your letter, containing a magnificent proposal for my benefit, which will be memorable to me for the rest of my life.

Allow me to say that the letter, both in purport and expression, is worthy to be called magnanimous and noble ; that it is without example in my own poor history, and I think is unexampled too in the history of Governing Persons towards men of

letters at the present or at any time, and that I will carefully preserve it as one of the things gracious to memory and heart ; a real treasure and benefit *it*—independent of all results from it.

This said to yourself and repositied with many feelings in my own grateful mind I have only to add that your splendid and generous proposals for my practical behoof must not any of them take effect ; that titles of honour are, in all degrees of them, out of keeping with the tenor of my poor existence hitherto in this epoch of the world, and would be an encumbrance not a furtherance to me ; that as to money, it has after long years of rigorous and frugal but also (thank God and those that are gone before me) not degrading poverty, become in this later time amply abundant, even super-abundant, more of it, too, now a hindrance not a help to me, so that Royal or other bounty would be more than thrown away in my case : and in brief that except the feeling of your fine and noble conduct on this occasion, which is a real and permanent possession, there cannot anything

be done that would not now be a sorrow rather than a pleasure.

With thanks more than usually sincere,  
I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

T. CARLYLE.

To the Rt. Honble. B. D'Israeli, M.P., etc.

The high courtesy of these fine letters reflects the greatness of spirit of those times, at which our present Lilliputians jeer.

## CHAPTER IX

MATTHEW ARNOLD

WITH Matthew Arnold I was on intimate terms for many years. I have stayed in his house at Cobham and he has visited me in mine. He knew nothing of the tortured soul of Carlyle; he experienced none of the beatific visions of Ruskin. He went his way through the world unmoved by passion, untouched by calamity, serene, cultured, and urbane. He observed human affairs around him with an attitude of detachment.

The iniquities of men failed to rouse his indignation, their wrongs engendered no resentment, and with Olympian calm he lived his life, preaching and practising his precept of sweetness and light.

In all his wide reading he seemed to have remembered nothing but what was charming and delightful. No controversy ruffled him ;

no argument disturbed his equanimity ; he was bland to his adversary, and affectionate to his friend ; the most perfect man of letters of the Victorian age.

In all matters of literature, whether of prose or poetry, his criticism was both illuminating and incisive. Steeped from youth up in the classics, his standards were severe and exacting ; he praised clear, simple, direct English and condemned obscurity or slovenliness.

He had a very merry wit. I remember once someone asked him to state exactly what a good style in writing was. He replied, " My dear friend, if you don't know what a good style is I am not going to tell you, and if it were necessary to tell you you would not know what it is when I did tell you."

His poetry had a vein of melancholy in it that came from somewhere in his nature that was hidden from the world and his most intimate friends.

His objective personality was always benignly happy. I never remember discovering him in a sorrowful or dejected mood.

*The Scholar Gipsy* and *Thyrsis* touched the

heart with a beautiful but poignant sadness ;  
with perfect mastery and with sure hand he  
pours upon our hearts the haunting association  
of the river, the low hills, the waning light,  
and the lonely tree, with the lost friend with  
whom he had wandered happily among those  
lovely landmarks.

And see  
Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify  
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,  
Bare on its lonely ridge the Tree ! the Tree !

I take the omen ! Eve lets down her veil,  
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,  
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,  
And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out.  
I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,  
Yet, happy omen, hail !  
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale  
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep  
The morningless and unawakening sleep  
Under the flowery oleanders pale).  
Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there !  
Ah, vain ! These English fields, this upland dim,  
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,  
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him ;  
To a boon southern country he is fled,  
And now in happier air,  
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine . . .  
Within a folding of the Appennine.

The pang of lost friendship surely comes in these lines from a heart pierced through and through with sorrow. And if the true character of a man stands revealed in his writings, Matthew Arnold must have possessed a soul tender with sweet regrets for his friend and fellow poet who went away to Italy, never to return.

Matthew Arnold and his teaching fitted very well the long years of peace and prosperity through which he lived ; he was a power in England to shame the vulgar and encourage the refined. He softened the asperities of controversy with his perfectly equipoised temper ; he corrected the follies of the young barbarians with delicate banter ; he assuaged the acerbities of the secretaries with playful humour.

He liked to discover what was best in everybody and to be unobservant of their failings—a most gracious man, full of the milk of human kindness.

Once, when all the world was laughing at Oscar Wilde as a coxcomb and poser, he said to me, “ They are all wrong ; he is a man of considerable intellectual power, a fine

scholar, and when he has outgrown his nonsense will, I think, do some notable literary work."

This was when Wilde was chiefly occupied in making himself talked about, with his sunflower in his buttonhole and his Byronic habiliments, and was many years before suffering and remorse had drawn from him his ballad of Reading gaol and his *De Profundis*, expressing with awful intentness the sympathy and anguish of a broken man, written with a pen dipped in the blood of his own torture-wounds.

Matthew Arnold was a writer, not a speaker, and the mistake of his life was when he allowed himself to be persuaded to go on a lecture tour in America. He quite failed to make himself heard beyond the first few rows of seats, and suffered the humiliation of being told in the Press to repair to an elocutionist for some lessons in voice production. In his articles on America and its Press, which appeared in the London monthlies on his return, he enjoyed the retort courteous, which irritated our cousins across the Atlantic as much as it amused us at

home. But, quite apart from his lectures, the Americans did not rightly understand him.

His Olympian manner, always tempered by a twinkle of the eye, they mistook for pride; and his imperturbable suavity they thought was an affectation. Perhaps he required to be well known to be fully understood. To me he seemed, on the whole, among the poets whom I have counted among my friends, to be the most satisfying when encountered face to face.

When, without any premonition or warning, he suddenly departed from the world, he left in it a space which none could fill, and it was with a sense of pitiful loss that I saw his mortal part lowered into the grave in Laleham churchyard. Sudden death, so merciful to the departed, comes as a fierce and stunning blow to the friends and kinsfolk left in life.

For it so falls out  
That what we have we prize not to the worth  
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lacked and lost,  
Why, then we rack the value, then we find  
The virtue that possession would not show us  
Whiles it was ours.

It has been my lot in life to count among my friends many men of distinction older than myself; this has been a privilege difficult to overestimate, but it brings with it the sadness of seeing them one by one depart before me and leave me intellectually more and more a lonely man. Dr. Johnson said that as anyone grew on in life it behoved him to keep his friendships in repair.

Well, I have done my best, and my young friends are more indulgent to me than I perhaps deserve, and for kindly affection I do not want; but for range of thought, familiarity with great literature, fine culture and faultless taste, they fall a little behind the cultivated Victorians I have known as companions in my library. That many of my beautiful books have been handled lovingly by great men long gone away, and many of them given to me by the illustrious writers of them, makes the room where I write to me a hallowed sanctuary, and when I sit here pen in hand in the quiet night hours, when all the household have gone to rest, I could readily believe that

the beloved volumes whisper to me what to write, mingling in a sweet communion with my listening heart.

## CHAPTER X

### GORDON OF KHARTOUM

IN all the aggrandisement of the neo-Georgians and in all the depreciation of the Victorians which characterise the literature of to-day I never expected to meet a writer with the temerity to belittle General Gordon of Khartoum. Here was a man who, in his single person, fulfilled the highest British ideal of a gentleman, a Christian, and a hero; one whom the whole nation has honoured; whose life was one long act of noble self-sacrifice; whose death crowned him with imperishable glory; and yet even this superb and knightly figure must be derided by those to whom such self-sacrifice is incomprehensible and such nobility absurd. Nothing apparently seems so ridiculous to the latest biographer as Gordon's belief in God and his reverence for the Bible. We may

surmise from his own style and caste of mind that if ever this writer should need consolation in troubles or guidance in conduct it would not be to the Bible he would turn.

The simple faith of such a man as Gordon I suppose presents to the youth of to-day something risible ; and that he should find comfort when far from home in the lone deserts of Africa in his belief in Christianity and in his reverence for the Bible no doubt awakes no sympathy in a writer who sits at home in safety, facing no inconvenience greater than the exhaustion of his ink-pot, and so we find this is how he thinks it proper to write :

But the Holy Book was not his only solace. For now, under the parching African sun, we catch glimpses, for the first time, of Gordon's hand stretching out towards stimulants of a more material quality.

Very smart, is it not ? The clever young gentleman knows his present-day audience perfectly ; he knows how the delighted chuckle will go round as he thus, with a smirk, pricks the bubble of Gordon's reputation.

Well, the greatest of men have some fault or failing to which they have succumbed at some time in their lives, but no man could ever have performed for years what Gordon did, or have achieved the greatness he achieved long after the date when he yielded to this passing weakness thus mockingly revealed, unless he had risen up from it and thrown it from him.

The mind of Gordon is utterly incomprehensible to the modern scoffers; they cannot conceive that he could really believe that he was guided in all his actions by the hand of God. When he returned from a mission to the Cape he was in doubt upon what new field of effort to embark. "He waited," we read, "in an odd hesitation. He opened the Bible, but neither the prophecies of Moses nor the epistles to Timothy gave him any advice." Such is the raillery that runs through this latest record of Gordon's life.

But to some of us that very faith of his, though we may not perhaps ourselves share it, is what draws our hearts so irresistibly towards him, and makes us ready to do him

honour even though this last Georgian writer may think him, and us, so ridiculous.

I have seen, with my own eyes, the copy of Cardinal Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* which Gordon carried about with him in his pocket during his last long vigil at Khartoum. It was thumbed, and marked, and bore indubitable evidence that he constantly read and re-read it. I repeated his markings in my own copy before the original was returned to its owner.

It is not difficult to imagine the solitary warrior, after the last European had left him and gone down the Nile, taking the little volume from his pocket and turning to these lines :

Rouse thee, my fainting soul, and play the man ;  
And through such waning span  
Of life and thought as still has to be trod  
Prepare to meet thy God.  
And while the storm of that bewilderment  
Is for a season spent,  
And, ere afresh the ruin on me fall,  
Use well the interval.

That he was, above all, a great commander of men, who shall doubt, after the homage offered him by that man of few words, Lord

Kitchener : " The memorable siege of Khartoum lasted 317 days, and it is not too much to say that such a noble resistance was due to the indomitable resolution and resource of one Englishman."

Well do I remember that winter night when, sitting over my fire in London, I heard the newspaper men shouting down the street, " Fall of Khartoum ! Death of General Gordon ! " and the anguish the dismal clamour in the echoing street struck into my heart.

The history of England surely records no more tragic figure than that of this lonely soldier on the roof of the palace at Khartoum, all the Englishmen having left him, gazing across the sand for the relief that never came—till he was dead—tragic, yes, and glorious in his stainless honour, true to his country and his God to his last breath. And here is a young Englishman who has told the story in a spirit of mockery which flows from his pen through page after page of the recital !

The great men who knew Gordon in life all stand uncovered before him, and Sir William Butler exclaims, " Doubtful indeed is it if

anywhere in the past we shall find figure of knight or soldier equal to him ! ” When Li Hung Chang, who had witnessed the valour, resource, and nobility of Gordon in China, came to this country, his first act was to drive to Trafalgar Square, alight from his carriage, and advance with slow reverence to the foot of Gordon’s statue, and, before all the world, make three low obeisances before it. The statue stands, with the Bible under its arm, in the centre of the greatest city in the greatest Empire the world has ever seen, and the name of the saint and hero is cherished in the hearts of his countrymen, where no mocking hand of superficial youth can ever deface it.

“ He gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God.”

## CHAPTER XI.

### OTHER GREAT VICTORIANS

AMONG other great writers of the Victorian age with whom I have conversed but whom I cannot claim as my intimate friends, and of whom, therefore, I cannot speak with familiar knowledge, I can recount Tennyson, Froude, Lecky, and Browning.

I was in the company of Tennyson only twice in my life; on the first occasion I spent the day at Farringford House, in the Isle of Wight, with my father, who knew the poet quite well, and I listened to, more than participated in, the talk that took place. He appeared to be very sombre and self-absorbed, a striking contrast to Matthew Arnold, with his genial openness and easy gaiety.

From what was visible of his face I marvelled that he should willingly cover the

rest of it with a black beard and moustache. He would have discovered, I feel sure, a very noble aspect but for that obscuring and indeed disfiguring appendage. His voice was deep and vibrant, and he gave the impression of physical strength.

I unfortunately made no note of his talk, and can only remember that he complained of being constantly intruded upon by people he did not know or want to know ; but somehow, when my father said it was the inevitable concomitant of fame, I did not feel certain that the intrusions did not really rather serve to flatter and please him.

It is strange that the memory generally preserves such trifles as this, and allows what is valuable to lapse into oblivion, treasuring the chaff and sending the grain to the winds !

The only other time when I saw Tennyson was at a private view of the Academy, when, coming upon him, my father, with whom I was, accosted him by name, upon which the poet said, " Don't mention my name ; I do not wish to be known " ; which was extremely amusing, insomuch as his face was familiar to everybody in England, and

his identity rendered impossible to mistake by his voluminous black cloak and broad-brimmed sombrero hat.

I suppose no poet except Shakespeare has been so universally acclaimed throughout the English-speaking world. When any of the twentieth-century poets can give us anything comparable with "In Memoriam" it will be time for them to challenge the supremacy of this greatest of the Victorian singers.

James Anthony Froude I met once at a house in Devon, of which county he was a native, but I remember no single notable circumstance of his talk.

For sheer eloquence his writings are universally acknowledged as supreme, but his accuracy as an historian has been impugned, which, of course, has in a measure depressed his reputation in the world of letters, and his life of Carlyle won for him a character for malignity difficult to ignore; but this does not prevent our recognising the splendour and pomp of some of his declamatory outpourings that carry his prose into a region where no living writers, save

perhaps William Watson and Belloc, can follow him.

Lecky I first met by the graveside at Matthew Arnold's funeral at Laleham, and I travelled back to London in his company, and thereafter became his acquaintance, though never properly his friend.

His appearance was not at all indicative of his undoubted power as a writer. He had a white, indeterminate face, quite lacking in strength or force, lank, pale hair, and a loose, weak mouth.

He was very tall and lean and usually walked abroad without a stick, with his hands clasped behind his back. He seemed to sway from side to side as he proceeded along the streets, which I suppose caused Carlyle to allude to him as "that willowy ma-an." His learned and fascinating books on the history of civilisation have somehow missed achieving a position of acknowledged greatness in the literary world.

I think this is a proof that to the mass of mankind what a man says may be admirable and just and true, but unless he has a manner of saying it that either reaches the feelings

as well as the intellect, or is framed in a style that fascinates the ear and the taste besides informing the mind, his works will gradually come to be read and appreciated only by students and men of letters.

Browning I knew personally more intimately than either Froude, Lecky, or Tennyson. He frequently dined with us at home, and I constantly met him out at dinner in other houses.

He always seemed to me strangely disconnected from his writings. His discourse had no sense of the closeness of thought and even profundity of philosophy that runs often through his works. He had not in the least the aspect of a poet. It must be reluctantly admitted that he was not in any way a distinguished-looking man, and the disappointment experienced at his appearance was aggravated by the tenor of his conversation, which really was not illuminating or diverting or even interesting.

The grotesqueness of his style, which I suppose was elaborated with deliberation from the later work of Byron, was not a natural expression of his mind, but an artificial

invention, and was the first rebellion against law and order in poetry that has led on to the complete anarchy espoused by some of the modern writers of indifferent prose which they erroneously call poetry.

To rhyme "Pachiorotto" with "pint pot, oh!" is not poetry. It is of no use arguing with anyone who says it is; you might as profitably argue with a Bolshevist about political economy.

From the earliest ages of civilisation poetry has had the quality of falling musically upon the ear as to sound and rhythmically as to measure, and writing that does neither the one nor the other is not poetry, and may not even be good prose.

To anyone with an ear for measure and music, to read Browning aloud is as painful a mental process as walking over jagged rocks with one's boots off is painful as a physical process.

I do not wonder it required Browning Societies to advertise his works; but time has, I think, brought them to an end, and, the artificial stimulus removed, the works of the master I fear rather languish. The

moderns may claim him as the one Victorian who practised—tentatively compared with themselves indeed, but still practised—their disruptive methods.

Of the sentiments expressed in his works it is impossible to speak too laudatorily. Everything fine in life and character he upheld, and everything base he condemned ; and in all the relations of life he rang true. All that he ever wrote was strong and good, but it did not come from him apparelled in the sweet harmony and lovely cadence of the great singers of all time.

George Macdonald was for many years my intimate friend. He had a beautiful house at Bordighera, and in the winter of 1894-5 I took a villa there near by and saw much of him.

He was one of those happy souls who seem to be born good. I do not think that the temptations that assail the rest of us poor erring mortals ever impinged upon his life. He radiated kindly benevolence to all about him, and by noticing and remarking upon any good qualities that he could discover in others he led them to cultivate those qualities.

He exercised a wide influence among the English visitors, and his large sitting-room, which was almost the size of a public hall, was always placed at the service of anybody wanting to bring people together for good purposes. He constantly made his house the home of destitute, forlorn people and orphans, and would give away all he had in the world if moved to do so by his infinite compassion.

He wrote much and well, but he was in himself something more beautiful and blessed than all his books. He was perfectly simple, and had no affectations, and did not make so much noise in the world as some of his contemporaries, but he necessarily compelled the affections of all who came in contact with him.

I contrast him in my mind with Whistler, whom I knew quite well as an acquaintance—a clever, gifted man who rejoiced in acid combats with all and sundry, who ushered himself into drawing-rooms with a long white wand six or seven feet long in his finger and thumb, such as sidesmen in some churches carry as emblems of their office, the visible

assertion of an affectation that permeated his whole life.

He spent his energies in squabbles that were never dignified and often ignoble, had an insatiable love of notoriety, and was indifferent to what was said of him as long as he was constantly talked about.

He lived into old age, unmellowed and ungracious, still affecting the acrid sharpness of his youth when it would have become him better to leave his asperities behind him and cultivate the urbane qualities that best befit the old.

Acquaintance with Whistler, though it may have stimulated the intelligence, added nothing to the comfort of those who enjoyed it. The friendship of George Macdonald broadened the mind, deepened the affections, added a pleasure to life, and when he had gone left behind it a blessed memory.

## CHAPTER XII

DEAN STANLEY, DEAN VAUGHAN,  
CANON LIDDON

HAVING established, I hope, the supremacy of the two great Cardinals of the Roman Church who flourished in the Victorian times, I venture to maintain that there was a similar elevation above the twentieth century observable then among the celebrated dignitaries of the Church of England.

I do not imagine that anyone will maintain that the Deans of Westminster who have succeeded him can claim to be at all on the same level of distinction with Dean Stanley, nor has anyone who has followed Dean Vaughan as Master of the Temple approached him in influence and fame ; and no preacher has arisen to compare with Canon Liddon, who compelled the absorbed attention of congregations in St. Paul's such as have never

been collected by any of the canons that have filled the stalls in this century.

The names of these three great Churchmen were familiar in every household in England, and they shed a lustre upon the national Church. Few people to-day outside the precincts of the Abbey know even the name of the present Dean of Westminster; he wears a beard, is a very learned scholar, has been a bishop in two dioceses, but has left, and will leave, no mark whatever upon the world. The present Master of the Temple is quite unknown outside the purlieu of the Inns of Court, and though I am sure a most reputable and worthy gentleman, no one can anticipate that he will enjoy, while in occupation of his high office, or leave behind him when he quits it, the fame associated with the name of Dean Vaughan, and the whole Church of England to-day cannot produce such a preacher as Liddon, whose ardent eloquence brought together under the dome of St. Paul's men famous in all ranks and callings in life—Ministers of State, philosophers, artists, and men of letters.

These three dignitaries of the English

Church not seldom honoured my father's table at his fortnightly parties, and they were contributors to much interesting discourse. Dean Stanley was on terms of affectionate intimacy with the Queen, and it was surmised that his advice was sought for and accepted by her in the appointment of bishops and deans. He was quiet and reposeful in private life, and was consulted by persons of all sorts, from cabinet ministers to the youngest curate, on account of his ripe wisdom and perfect integrity. On one occasion he came to my father for advice himself on a matter of the utmost perplexity. A certain clergyman of considerable position, and enjoying a wide circle of distinguished friends, was detected in an act of flagrant misbehaviour, and in his horror and terror hurried to the Dean and made a full confession of his guilt. The Dean bade him resign his benefice and unfrock from his priesthood. But finding that the lady who had discovered his guilt was not likely to do more than take very secure steps to prevent its repetition, the guilty man recovered his courage and wrote to the Dean that he withdrew his

confession, which he avowed was tendered in a moment of hysteria. In these singularly difficult circumstances the Dean sought my father's advice as to how next to proceed. The advice he received was that the matter really lay in the lady's hands, and that unless she herself took some steps to bring the guilt home to the culprit the Dean would be well advised to take no overt steps in the matter. Accordingly the Dean did nothing; the sinning clergyman remained in possession of his benefice and his orders, survived the Dean many years, and died ultimately in all the odour of sanctity. But the Dean never spoke to him again.

Such disasters must, I suppose, occasionally happen in all human societies; and now and then it must occur that a clergyman falls into a pit of sin in spite of all that surrounds him, calling him away from wickedness, and when such a catastrophe overtakes him and he is discovered, it is perhaps better for the world that he should be left to the anguish of his conscience than that a gaping, giggling Press should shout round the globe all the squalid details of his fall.

Mrs. Vaughan, the wife of the Master of the Temple, was Dean Stanley's sister, and was a brilliant and forceful person. I once told her a ghost story, and discovered that she had an insatiable appetite for that sort of absurdity, and ever after I was in the habit of carrying to her at once every tale about spooks I could collect.

Mrs. Vaughan had a very bright sense of humour and a most downright, forthright way of talking, which made her comments on her contemporaries a veritable banquet of diversion. "The Master" was less witty than satirical, and he delivered the most biting sarcasms with the benign air of paying delicate compliments. Many of his victims never discovered that they were being made ridiculous, and if they did they found it very difficult to retort upon so subtle an adversary. He held the Deanery of Llandaff contemporaneously with the Mastership, and in that little cathedral town he rather overshadowed Dr. Lewis, the admirable and entirely pleasant little Bishop. I am not sure whether I myself ever suffered under the satire of the redoubtable master; I do not remember such an

occasion ; but then I may have been delicately vivisected for the delight of the bystanders and have never discovered it owing to the anæsthesia of his velvet and caressing address !

## CHAPTER XIII

OSCAR WILDE

I FIRST met Oscar Wilde when I was on a visit to a friend at Magdalen College, Oxford, he being then an undergraduate there.

He exhibited a certain affectation of manner, but he was manifestly a man of wide reading and scholarship. He talked well, and was extremely humorous and diverting.

Later on I had occasion to see him frequently, as he shared with me the reviewing of books on one of the London papers.

I myself undertook the task of reviewing because I wished to combine a congenial occupation with the acquisition of a good standard library, the latter object being achieved by the exchange with booksellers of masses of new books, sent me from the paper, for old standard works.

An amusing incident in our joint reviewing occurred when we reviewed each other's

books. I hope the public were duly impressed with the charming things we said of each other. I fear we were unblushing adepts at the gentle art of "log rolling."

In those days he was a genial, happy fellow, bubbling over with kindly fun, and as far as I could see with nothing abnormal, much less repulsive, about him.

His good nature and also his personal courage were displayed very finely on one occasion in defence of a friend. He was at the time sharing his rooms looking over the Thames with a young gentleman who was an artist of some repute and whose father was a dignitary of the Church.

This young artist, as has happened before and will happen again, got into trouble with a woman, who, by pretending that certain things were so that were not so in truth, induced the silly boy to commit an act of extreme folly. Then began the usual blackmail, entailing the terror and misery of its ingenuous victim. He revealed his trouble to his fellow tenant, and Wilde immediately volunteered to do his best to rescue him from his persecutor.

The lady was invited to come to the flat for a conference on a certain day, and the young artist was sent to his home, leaving Wilde alone for the interview.

The lady duly arrived, and Wilde explained that his friend had gone out for a few minutes but would be back directly, and proceeded to express reluctant sympathy with his visitor and listened with shocked surprise to the tale recited by the lady.

Presently Wilde appeared to be entirely won over to an endorsement of the lady's charges, and even showed an inclination to assist her in the righting of her wrongs. But before he could do anything to assist her, he explained that he must see the evidence upon which she relied.

The lady, completely deceived by Wilde's admirable acting, produced from her bag the incriminating document and handed it to Wilde, who affected to inspect it with conviction of his friend's guilt.

"This is, I suppose," he said, "the only evidence you have?"

"It is," she replied.

"You ought to have taken a copy of it,"

he went on, "in case you should lose it. Have you done so?"

"No," she replied, "but I will do so."

"I am afraid it is too late," said Wilde, placing the document in the fire and pressing it into the flames with the poker.

The lady, in a fury, went to the door and called up the bully who was waiting below, but when he arrived and saw Wilde, who was a big, powerful man, quite prepared to throw him down the stairs, he departed, after some volcanic language, with his accomplice, and they were heard of no more.

It is not everyone who would with kindness, courage, and skill, thus come to his friend's help when in dire trouble. These were Wilde's happy and prosperous days, before he fell into the abyss from which he only emerged to die.

Some of his writings have nothing but the most exquisite purity and beauty in them. The volume written for children, *The Happy Prince and Other Stories*, has a story in it entitled "The Selfish Giant" which it is impossible to imagine as having come from a man with a foul mind. There must have

been in this man a dual personality ever contending for the mastery of his soul.

I remember on one occasion desiring to take a young girl-relative to a theatre, and finding that the only play then being performed in London that was entirely and unquestionably fit for the enjoyment of an innocent little girl was *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

It should be remembered that abnormal tendencies are admittedly heritable, that his mother was eccentric even to the margin of personal irresponsibility, and that his father was reputed to be without adequate self-control in certain fields of human activity. These, his antecedents, open up questions deep, dark, and obscure, as to personal responsibility in such a man who did deeds inconceivable to ordinary healthy people.

I remember reading many years ago in a little play published in Blackwood's a dialogue which I can only now quote from an imperfect memory, but I think it ran thus :

A. Do you blame the oak for being stunted that is planted on a rock ?

B. No, I blame the husbandman who planted it there.

A. But what if the husbandman be God? It will take another world to explain the injustices of this one.

No one will ever see the other face of the moon till, having climbed heaven, he looks back.

There I must leave this dreadful matter, hoping and believing that there is infinite mercy for the worst of sinners that truly repents.

## CHAPTER XIV

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK

I HAVE ever observed that the study of some specialised field of science tends to narrow the mind. Darwin made the dreary confession with his own hand that Shakespeare and the poets, whom he loved in his ingenuous youth, meant nothing to him after he had given up his mind to the exclusive study of scientific hypotheses based upon accumulated items of fact.

Of course the study of science can have no relation whatever to human conduct ; the deepest erudition in the higher mathematics can never stimulate a man to fine actions, widen his human sympathies, refine his taste, or sublimiate his emotions. These splendid edifications of human character are induced by the study of letters, and familiarity with all that the best and wisest of mankind have written since the world began.

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SIR JOHN LUBBOCK 101

Having early in life been saved from a scientific career, to which I was as a youth destined, by my own conviction as to its sterilising power upon the mind and heart, I never cultivated an intimacy with men of science with one exception, if it really was an exception. For many years I had the pleasure of knowing Sir John Lubbock, and can testify that such science as he pursued never ossified his heart or destroyed his breadth of mind.

Perhaps his very human calling as a banker kept him sufficiently in touch with the world and its affairs to prevent his scientific studies from effecting their usual mortification of the sensibilities of the mind.

He was so far in touch with letters as to be the author of some slight but charming little books on the pleasures of life and the beauties of nature.

He was a very sweet-tempered man, with a capacity for infinite patience in his investigations into the life and habits of bees and ants. At his home at High Elms, where I had the pleasure of visiting him, he kept his ants' nests in his library in most ingenious

captivity. They were arranged on large trays one over another, each swinging horizontally from a hinge at one corner from a stout, upright support. Each nest was spread out with a sheet of plate glass over the narrow layer of earth in which the ants constructed their city, and a little trough of water surrounded the whole nest, which effectually prevented any of the ants straying away, for they never seem to have voluntarily embarked on a voyage over the water.

Once when I was staying there a terrible ant tragedy occurred! The governess, who was a very enthusiastic abettor of Sir John's investigations, had discovered in the park a nest of ants which were of a unique species (if that is the right word), and with great triumph the little people had been transferred to a rack in the library. When all had been safely transacted Sir John departed for the city, and while he was skilfully guiding the affairs of Messrs. Robarts Lubbock & Company in Lombard Street a terrific combat was being waged in the library at High Elms. By inadvertence a little wisp of straw or hay had been left hanging over from the new nest to

the one below, forming a bridge across the moat of water and a scaling ladder for the inhabitants underneath, and alas! they chanced to be of a most warlike caste, and up the straw they marched in fierce storming parties, and before Sir John returned at nightfall every one of the unique ants was dead, and the conquerors were in undisputed possession of the new nest.

On the 8th of July, 1883, I went with Sir John to visit Stonehenge, and was very interested in learning from him that all the stones except two or three were from the neighbourhood, that one came no one knew whence, certainly not nearer than Cornwall, and that it was doubtful whether it could be matched there; that in Ireland it might be matched, but that whence it came and how it was brought there was a mystery.

In 1883 Stonehenge was a lonely place, to which but few visitors went except occasionally in the summer, and its impressive solemnity had not been destroyed by the modern enclosure round it, with turnstile entrance, and adjacent soldier camps.

We went from Stonehenge to Salisbury,

where Sir John took me to the Museum and discoursed learnedly about the stone axes and arrow-heads there displayed. He said that the users of the bronze hatchets were probably as far behind the time of Stonehenge as that is behind us ; and he said that a bronze axe and the skeleton of an elephant had been found together in an excavation in Gray's Inn Lane.

One other clear memory I have of him as a scientific authority. I remember at dinner at High Elms, when there were many fellow guests whose names I forget, he stated that there could be no doubt whatever that if two ships equally efficiently equipped and equally efficiently manned were despatched, one to the Arctic circle and the other to the tropics, and retained there for an equally prolonged period, it would be found that the ill-health and mortality of the crew in the tropics would very much exceed the ill-health and mortality of the crew in the Arctic circle.

At that time, when I was staying with him, Sir John was industriously at work upon the leaves of trees, his object being to discover the causes of their shapes ; he believed that

nothing in such matters is left to chance, and he concluded that the shape of every leaf is arbitrarily dictated by Nature for some certainly adequate reason which he was determined to discover.

He asked me to take careful photographs of leaves for him (finding that I amused myself with a camera), saying that it would be a considerable assistance to him. I did this for him and sent him a set of photographs of all sorts of leaves, but I never heard whether he succeeded in determining the causes of their shapes.

Later in life Sir John Lubbock accepted a peerage and became Lord Avebury, selecting his title from the ancient British village in which he took so lively an interest. But in his case, as in that of Lord Iddesleigh, the public have never ceased to prefer, with a kind of proprietary affection, to call the one Sir Stafford Northcote and the other Sir John Lubbock.

## CHAPTER XV

### LEIGHTON AND WATTS

IN my youth it was my habit to frequent the studios of the painters of those days, many of whom have long gone on before me, some of them, such as George Munn, being cut off just as their powers were ripening, and the promise of their young years beginning to be royally fulfilled, but before the world had fully discovered them and acclaimed them as they deserved. Others, such as Leighton and Watts, who lived to attain a position of unchallenged fame, I had the privilege of knowing intimately for many years.

The experience of my life has confirmed in me the opinion that the most delightful companions in the world are the artists. The hours spent, when I was young, in the studios of Bloomsbury were among the happiest in my life.

When the light failed in the winter months, and the brushes were laid aside, brother artists and friends would gather round the stove in the gloaming and discuss every manner of subject with a wit, sympathy, and broad-minded intelligence which did not seem to come so spontaneously and naturally in any other surroundings. There was something in the atmosphere and quiet of the old studios that had a great and fascinating charm to me, and I have always felt that those shrines of peaceful work and high endeavour brought out all that was best in friendly talk, when the day's work was over, the easels rolled back, and the tattered old chairs drawn up round the fire.

In those happy, far-off days no painter doubted that the supreme quality in his work towards which he should strive was beauty, and the quest and pursuit of beauty led, I believe, to a serenity of character that made them very agreeable acquaintances and delightful friends. I may confess that when I see the prevalent ugliness of the work of the young painters of to-day I feel no

wish to visit their studios or cultivate their friendship.

Hideousness as a cult cannot lead to agreeableness of character, and to sit in a studio filled with the nightmares which the ingenious proprietor of a certain gallery near Leicester Square sometimes exposes to the public view would afford me no more contentment than a visit to Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors.

Leighton was a man of the most wonderful accomplishments. He was a finished and eloquent orator, he was a great linguist, perfectly at his ease in Italian and French, he was a sculptor of undoubted power, he was a painter who took a high place among all his great contemporaries, he was a very handsome person, and one of the best conversationalists of his time.

He splendidly fulfilled all the functions of President at Burlington House; he was a glorious Victorian, rendering any comparison with his successors in the Chair of the Academy very unfortunate for them.

He made me always welcome at his beautiful house and studio, which perhaps erred a little on the side of magnificence, giving the impression more of a palace of art than of a home. But he was unmarried and a princely personage, who perhaps was appropriately housed in a palace.

I was once led into an unfortunate comment upon his work by the very eloquence of his talk. His large canvas of *Andromeda* was approaching completion when he first let me see it, and, standing before the great canvas, he so illumined it with his decorative and finely worded description of all that he had desired to convey with his brush that in response to his beautiful visionary language I exclaimed :

“ Ah, Sir Frederick, your description of all that the picture means greatly adds to its beauty.”

He looked at me in sudden silence, and then said in a mortified voice, “ I hoped the picture would explain itself.”

I do not remember how I put myself right again with him ; and it was quite true that he was even more eloquent with his tongue

than with his brush. However, as he came and dined at my house a few days after this misadventure of mine, no doubt I was forgiven.

On Sunday afternoons Leighton used to receive his friends in his studio, and often a most interesting gathering came together ; but always at six o'clock, whoever might still be present, he made his excuses and went away to visit his old father. This was one of his unbroken habits, and another was his rule of always being in bed by twelve o'clock. Nothing would induce him to violate either of these settled customs.

Watts, whom I knew even more intimately than Leighton, presented an entire contrast to him. The one lived the life of a public man, the other lived as a recluse. Watts was never seen at a public gathering, went to no banquets, and never made a speech, as far as I can remember, in his life.

He lived alone with his art, he cared nothing for anything else, and laid up but little treasure in this world, keeping round him at Little Holland House a gallery of priceless pictures any one of which, if sold, would have

yielded him enough for all his wants for several years. The single work "Paulo and Francesca," if put up at Christie's, would probably fetch a king's ransom.

He was a man with a great sorrow at the core of his life, concerning which I alone was admitted to his confidence. A time may come, if I am spared some years longer, when it will be right for me to tell the true story of that part of this great man's life which has never been known to the world, but which redounds to his dignity and worth.

The longer I knew him the deeper became my reverence and affection for him.

I forget now whether it was at Monkshatch or at Limnersleas that I visited him on the occasion of his eightieth birthday and walked with him a little way out on the Hog's Back. But I remember with what quietness and sweetness he spoke of his long life of devotion to his art and the peace of mind and heart which he had reached at last.

He shed a lustre on his age, and was spared the pain and wretchedness which the spectacle of the ravings of the modern anarchists would have inflicted upon his soul. In his life and

death the haunting words of the Roman Catholic Liturgy were fulfilled :

In labore requies  
In aestu temperies  
In fletu solatium.

## CHAPTER XVI

### GREAT VICTORIAN STATESMEN

IN nothing has the descent from the Victorian age to the Georgian been so striking, undoubted, and deplorable as in the quality of the respective statesmen and the atmosphere of political life in the two periods. One has but to look back at Gladstone, Disraeli, Lord Salisbury, Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Hartington, The Duke of Argyll, Gathorne Hardy, and many other ministers of State, and then contemplate their successors to-day, to realise what a difference in quality stands patently revealed. From 1868 to 1895 Gladstone, Disraeli, and Lord Salisbury were England's Prime Ministers. They were all men of great personal refinement and scholarship, and they belonged to a different class altogether from the present occupant of 10 Downing Street ; and whatever arguments

may be advanced to justify the £400 a year allowance voted by Members of Parliament to themselves without any real mandate or sanction to do so having been derived from their constituents, there can be no doubt whatever that by voting themselves this dole the House of Commons fatally damaged their prestige in the world.

Another result that they have produced, which was, I imagine, quite unforeseen, is that the dole to the Members of the House of Commons has had the effect of considerably enhancing the position of the House of Lords in public esteem. Of course I am aware that it is the custom of each generation to bemoan its decadence when compared with those that preceded it, and as long ago as June, 1882, I find in my diary, for the 26th of that month, this entry :

Lords Dalhousie and Sherbrooke, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Bishop of Truro, Sir Henry Holland, Sir C. Bunbury, Lady Jane Dundas, and others to dinner to-night. The present deplorable condition of the House of Commons was much discussed ; " Bob Lowe " emphatic on its being due to the lowering of the franchise.

I dare say that Lord Sherbrooke was right in his contention that the lowering of the franchise had to an appreciable extent altered the character of the House of Commons, and had led to the intrusion upon it of persons who would never have arrived there before the Reform bills.

In 1882 Cabinet Ministers would never have dreamed of combining ordinary journalism with their high offices, and one cannot imagine Sir Stafford Northcote writing signed articles for money to a Sunday newspaper.

Conscious of the inferiority of the present politicians to the former statesmen, efforts are constantly made by writers of to-day to depreciate the past generation and level it down to the current vulgarity by inventing and promulgating any belittling story or gossip that can be attached to the great names of the past.

Mr. Gladstone, whose fame and moral grandeur will live into the unlimited future enshrined in the magnificent life that was the crown of Lord Morley's splendid literary career, presents to the modern Lilliputians

a challenging and provocative target for their vulgar darts, and we have a person calling herself "a woman of no importance" doing her best to deface what renders her insignificant, and declaring that she once "accidentally surprised Gladstone kissing Mrs. Cornwallis West, quite a harmless affair, but it impressed itself upon my memory, for she was pretty, soft, and round, while he looked like a hungry hawk, with fierce eyes and beak, pecking at her."

Now, firstly, I do not believe this person ever saw anything of the kind, and secondly, I take leave to tell her that, if she did, her publishing this description thirty or forty years afterwards, when both the people concerned are dead, shows her to be possessed of that measureless and malignant malice that in abnormal persons occasionally supplants the sweet and mellow benignity that is the proper adornment of old age.

Mr. Gladstone frequently was a guest of my father, and I had the honour of observing him closely and receiving small acts of courtesy from him, and this picture of him clawing a pretty woman and ogling

her like a hungry hawk fills me with a nauseating disgust of the person who could invent it.

Throughout his long life of service for his country Mrs. Gladstone was of immense help to him, as was Lady Northcote to her husband and many other wives of statesmen to their husbands. Statesmen's wives can do much to make or mar their husbands' careers, and disastrous injury to a public man can be done by the indiscretions of a pushful wife.

When Gladstone was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, at the conclusion of the service, after the last word of the noble liturgy had been said, Edward VII., then Prince of Wales, stepped across to where Mrs. Gladstone stood looking down into the grave, raised her hand to his lips, and kissed it, thus most graciously expressing the homage of England to that illustrious lady.

Lord Salisbury was a friend of my father, and as a youth I have stayed at Hatfield, and was often present in Arlington Street at the great entertainments in that celebrated

house. He was never so accessible as Mr. Gladstone, and I have no very definite recollections of his talk.

As a very young man I suffered a great embarrassment at Hatfield. I went there to stay for a ball and took a manservant with me; finding he could not be put up as the house was very full I told him after dinner to return without me to London. By some misunderstanding he packed up and took away with him my own things, so that when at about two in the morning I went to my room I found nothing there! I was in a fine state of shyness when in the morning I had to descend to face about forty people, mostly strangers, at breakfast in my evening clothes! I slunk first into the chapel and knelt beside Miss Beresford Hope, a cousin of the house, with whom I had danced overnight, and after the service explained to her my plight, and with sympathy and wit and kindliness she made my appalling entrance to breakfast an occasion for mirth and pleasantries which greatly comforted me. Next I had to get home in my dancing habiliments, and, having no overcoat even

to conceal them, was lent one by Mr. Arthur Balfour.

"So home," as Pepys might have written, "in my evening clothes in broad daylight, a merry jest to amuse my valet."

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE LATE LORD SHAFTESBURY

THE men who do the greatest work in the world for the benefit of mankind are commonly neglected by their contemporaries and forgotten by their successors.

A scourge of God will fascinate the imaginations of nations, fill the pages of history, and not seldom have statues erected to his memory.

A politician who confers the vote upon persons who were previously without it, which they can register in favour of the Big-Endians or the Little-Endians once perhaps in three or four years, is acclaimed with rapture, and his name is rendered immortal by being associated with some article of apparel, such as a collar, and his remains when he dies are interred with pomp and ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

A man of science who in the physical world aggravates the methods of human slaughter, and in the spiritual world deprives the wretched and forlorn of the consolations of faith, is applauded by the bishops and canonised by the Church. But he who spends his life and his strength in thankless and lonely struggles to mitigate the load of suffering borne by the weak, the helpless, and the lost, is left to the sole reward of his own quiet conscience and the hope that his solitary and anguished ardours are pleasing to God.

The Victorian age embraced a galaxy of men of genius who in the fields of art, letters, and philosophy decorated the period with glittering splendour; but there was one among them who without any commanding abilities, with no unusual gifts of expression, and with no party in the State or the Church to support him, by consecrating a long life to the service of the weak who were wronged, and the helpless who were crushed, started with his single voice that appeal to the mercy and justice of mankind which has gone around the world and awakened echoes in the remotest corners of the earth.

The seventh Earl of Shaftesbury will some day be acknowledged and acclaimed as one of the stainless glories of the nineteenth century. From early youth to the end of his illustrious life he laboured without ceasing to assuage the asperities of the life of the poor. Wonderful were the achievements of this great soldier of Christ. By his ceaseless struggles women whom he found dragging trucks on their hands and knees with a rope between their legs he brought up from the bottom of coal mines, never again to suffer such bestial degradation.

By his arduous protests he put an end for ever to the inhuman practice of forcing poor little boys up the insides of chimneys, half smothered with soot, and risking their young lives and limbs to make money for their brutal masters.

Far in advance of all contemporary statesmen and politicians he perceived that the physical squalor surrounding the slum dwellings of the very poor must always produce a spiritual and mental squalor, and that if we are to raise men up from such depths and lead them to think and live

cleanly they must first be enabled to possess clean and cheerful houses. Mere doles and charities he therefore declared will never advance the poor ; let us destroy pauperism, which is the cause of all the evils we see around us.

Few and rare were the occasions during his early combats when anyone on either side of politics would draw his sword to abet him.

John Bright, the great Tribune of the people, was frigidly civil ; Gladstone, whose burning eloquence was roused to glory by the woes of distant and alien sufferers in Bulgaria, throughout his long life of power and influence failed to be moved to expressions of sympathy or acts of rescue by the cruelties perpetrated in England hard by.

Meanwhile Lord Shaftesbury fought on. One by one the forts of evil and cruelty fell before him, and gradually others joined him. Notable was it that at the meeting of a few humane people held at the Mansion House in London to found the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children no politician on either side was present to aid that great and benevolent work. The three

chief persons at that historic little gathering were, besides Lord Shaftesbury, Cardinal Manning, Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, and Mr. Waugh. The vast welter of child misery which that splendid Society has assuaged since it was founded must make the angels weep for joy.

Lord Shaftesbury extended to me the privilege of his friendship, and I think whatever little good I may have done in my way through life is due very much to his example and precept. I was always free to enter his house in Grosvenor Square and enjoy his kindly and sane advice in any little matters where I was in doubt or difficulty, and, as I have walked with him in the streets, it was a moving sight to observe that almost every cabman and omnibus conductor recognised and took off his cap to him. His personal appearance was noble and benign, and his mere presence in any company raised a discussion into a region where meanness and smallness could not intrude.

In his later years, when he visited the House of Lords, he was by a universal courtesy accorded a particular seat, not on

the cross benches, but in the front row on the opposition side, which he occupied irrespective of the change of parties. This was a mark of peculiar honour which I believe has never been conceded to any other peer.

When I read to-day the cynicism poured upon the Victorian age by the clever and superior young neo-Georgians, I ask myself where is to be seen upon the present stage so august, so beneficent, so self-sacrificing, and so splendid a figure as that of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### BENCH AND BAR

IN my way through a long life it has been my fortune to know intimately many of those who have adorned the bench and the bar.

In the seventies I went circuit with Mr Justice Manisty as his Marshal, and on other occasions I performed the same duties for Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, then Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Lord Bowen, then Mr. Justice Bowen. Many other judges and barristers I have counted among my friends.

The besetting sin of lawyers is that they are apt in private life to harp on the cases in which they have been engaged. If you approach a judge in his club when he is talking to a friend, it is ten to one that as you come within earshot you will hear him saying, "And I told the jury," etc.

Painters do not in the same way harp on their pictures, nor architects on their edifices, nor doctors (thank heaven !) on their cases, nor writers on their own books.

Lord Bowen was quite free from this tiresome habit ; he was a brilliant talker on all manner of subjects, and was a born wit. Once he was asked to try a case brought over to the Queen's Bench from the Admiralty Court, both parties signifying their entire willingness to have it tried in Bowen's Court. Bowen assured them that he knew nothing about Admiralty work, but when all the counsel nevertheless begged him to try the case he reluctantly acquiesced, and added, " And may there be no moaning of the bar when I put out to sea."

His was a very different brand of wit from that ceaseless trickle of trivial jests with which a living judge exasperates every suitor whose case is tried before him.

When a man has at last determined to stake all on the arbitrament of the Courts of Justice he is filled with helpless anger when he discovers that what is to him perhaps the most momentous affair of his life

is turned by the judge into a peg on which to hang an endless string of jests and quips from the bench, at which counsel on both sides are bound obsequiously to hold their sides, lest his Lordship should think them dull fellows.

“Judges,” said Bacon, the greatest of all lawyers, “ought to be more learned than wittie,” and, had this judge curbed his jests few can doubt that he would have risen beyond a puisne judgeship of the King’s Bench, for to his ability and integrity all willingly will testify.

No one wants judges to be grim and portentous, but there is a happy mean between an unlifting solemnity and an endless succession of risible *obiter dicta*. I know that in private life this judge is a most genial and delightful person, though I have not myself the advantage of his friendship.

When the judges of the Victorian age are compared with those of this century, it must be conceded that in courtesy and good manners on the bench there has been a very general and remarkable improvement. Rudeness amounting to downright insolence

was a frequent characteristic of the old Mid-Victorian bench. To be screamed at for a whole morning by Mr. Justice Field, who himself was painfully deaf, must have been an experience at the bar deserving a very generous fee. As I was never a practising barrister myself I do not know how it must feel to be subjected to such shocking personal discourtesy. I am glad to think that the new race of judges are for the most part patient and courteous without being less efficient.

Lord Chief Justice Coleridge set an example to the old set of judges of suavity to all, and kindness to the juniors, which it would have been well if all his brother judges had followed. He brought to his office a great tradition and all the amenities that are natural to a scholar and a gentleman. His father before him had adorned the bench for twenty-four years, and his son, the second Lord Coleridge, has carried on the family characteristics on the bench of perfect English and exquisite diction in every utterance, together with an unfailing courtesy to all alike who practise before him.

Lord Russell, who succeeded the first Lord Coleridge as Chief Justice, was perhaps a greater lawyer, and was certainly a man of very powerful intellect, but he was altogether lacking in the wide culture and scholarly urbanity of his predecessor. It would be impossible to imagine Lord Coleridge taking snuff and displaying a red pocket handkerchief on the bench.

Lord Alverstone marked a still further descent in the holders of this great office. He affected to be a man of breezy, back-slapping temperament, wore his hat at a sporting, saucy angle, and thought it no derogation of his high office to go straight from a murder trial, ending in a sentence of death, to take a prominent part as judge or some such master of the ceremonies, at a glove fight. He was never a great or even satisfactory judge ; and practising barristers have told me that it was always unpleasant to appear before him.

Lord Reading possesses a very distinguished presence, a beautiful voice, an acute and penetrating mind, and faultless manners, and it was a great loss to the legal profession

when his abilities were diverted from the bench, which he so splendidly adorned, to other fields of activity, temporarily during the war, and finally on his transference to India.

The position of a judge is not at all what it was in the world a hundred years ago. Before the great rise in industrial wealth five thousand a year was a splendid income, and judges occupied a very envied position in general Society. Now five thousand a year cut down by income and super-tax to about three thousand, leaves a judge in the position vastly inferior as regards income to most of the barristers who appear in his court, who sometimes receive in one case fees equal to the judge's whole year's salary! The magnificence of the judges' progresses through the country on circuit in the last century marked them as very great personages. So late as the seventies Chief Justice Coleridge was met at Derby by the High Sheriff, Sir John Crewe of Calke Abbey, with a chariot and four, with postilions, and five hundred tenantry and retainers on horseback, all in the Crewe livery, together with halberdiers

and javelin men. Such a cavalcade through the streets of a great city naturally conferred on the judges an immense prestige.

All that splendour has long passed away, and I have heard of a judge who made his entry into his assize town seated on a two-wheeled velocipede, arrayed in a flannel shirt and collar, and crowned with a billycock hat. If the judges themselves thus exhibit contempt for their position, it is not wonderful that it sinks in public estimation.

The work of a judge is arduous. He has to be seated on his bench by 10.30 every morning, and all day long he has to keep a lively and strained attention riveted upon the evidence of which he has to take an elaborate note with his own hand, and later he has with care and fairness to sum up the evidence to the jury, with a short interval of half an hour for luncheon. This is his grinding and responsible labour every day, till 4.30 in London and often much later on circuit.

It is wonderful that a barrister making anything between ten and twenty-five

thousand a year will voluntarily come down to this treadmill for three thousand pounds a year !

Sir Samuel Evans, with whom I was intimate, often confessed to me how he detested having to get to the courts every morning at 10.30, " just like a schoolboy who has to get into his class-room when the bell rings," and to a man of his free and easy habit no doubt this compulsion was extremely galling.

Then there is the almost certain termination of a man's career in his acceptance of a judgeship ; there is an end to his ambitions. Fifteen years of drudging, then a pension, and extinction.

To many men who have been steadily climbing up their profession with increasing business and reputation the sudden substitution of interminable level trudging for the exciting scaling of a ladder is a real trial. But there is the consolation of the end of risk of shipwreck and the arrival of the ship safe into what is, after all, a fairly commodious port.

Altogether, the profession of the bar, if

successfully pursued, is apt so to occupy a man's whole time to the exclusion of all other interests that he is in great danger of finding himself late in life painfully ignorant of whole fields of knowledge connected with letters, and art, and of the general cultivation others have had time to acquire, and this no doubt accounts for that besetting sin of which I have spoken.

It has, however, two conspicuous advantages. It confers upon those who adopt it a clear perception of what is and what is not proper evidence upon which a judgment should be formed; which is a very great advantage to a man in all the occurrences of life. And it teaches men to enter the forensic arena against one another and honourably observe all the rules of the game in the heat of combat, and, when they have doffed their wigs and gowns, to walk away together from the Court, perhaps arm in arm, in perfect amity.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE STAGE

I AM inclined to give a general adhesion to Mr. Birrell's judgment upon the profession of an actor. "The act of mimicry," he says, "or the representation of feigned emotions called up by sham situations, is, in itself, an occupation an educated man should be slow to adopt as the profession of a life," and he contrasts the great man on the stage with the great man in real life, and, of course, to represent greatness can never really be comparable with being great, and I suppose everyone must feel that there must always be something derogatory to a man's personal dignity if, as his means of earning his living, it is necessary night after night to smear his face with grease and paint, to dress himself up to look like somebody else, and then subject himself to the judgment of those who

pay him to do this. A really great man one feels must always be, and appear to be, himself. He might as a diversion act a part in play, but he could not do it as his profession for a livelihood. Yet in spite of all this I confess with the utmost pleasure that many actors I have known would compare quite favourably as men of charm, integrity, and worth, with men great in other walks of life, and one still living, a life-long friend, has throughout his strenuous career on the stage borne himself as a stainless, knightly gentleman, generous to a fault, without reproach in thought, word, or deed.

Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson became my friend in the seventies ; he lived then at 25 Charlotte Street, which has long ago been demolished to make room for new buildings. It was an old house with a large studio out behind it, where I spent many happy hours and even days. His father and mother and his brother and sisters all lived there, and Johnston was the well and truly laid corner-stone of the genial and cultivated household.

I believe his profession as an actor was in

a manner forced upon him. He was trained as a painter, and was diligently pursuing his art when Phelps suddenly invited him to play Romeo, having, as his father's friend, observed Johnston's classic countenance, his wonderful speaking voice, and his manifestly romantic temperament, all of which marked him out as perfectly fitted for the part. So began his life as an actor, which closed with his memorable performance in *The Third Floor Back*.

He has played every kind of part in his long stage career, and always with distinction, but none so finely as when he reverently taught us all the infinite power of personal example in his last play. It is safe to say that no other player on the stage could have convinced in the part as he did.

He has, in a manner, in that play, raised the stage and his profession into an instrument for conveying a direct moral lesson to an audience, greater than is commonly discovered in the sermons of the clergy, and upon that fine note he has concluded his professional life. Countless thousands here and in America who have seen him in that

play in their hearts follow him in his retirement with benedictions.

For a great many years I was on intimate terms of friendship with Sir Henry Irving, and I think I must have been at every first night of his management at the Lyceum, except at one or two when I happened to be out of England. Of course, *The Bells* brought him prominently forward as a first-rate performer of melodrama, but it was his Hamlet, under Bateman's management, that established his claim with serious playgoers to rank among the master players and follow Macready in the great line reaching back to Betterton. In private life he was a man of great charm and sweetness, reposeful, humorous, and self-contained, with a winning courtesy to all and an impregnable loyalty to his friends. As he grew older and greyer his appearance became more and more impressive, and to his countenance, with its extreme pallor, beetling brows, and deep, inscrutable eyes, might be conceded the quality of magnificence.

His career as an actor is public property and needs no historian. His first act on

succeeding Bateman as lessee of the Lyceum Theatre was to invite Ellen Terry to join him, and the long and splendid reign of that felicitous combination, during which play after play of Shakespeare was splendidly produced, has, I suppose, never been rivalled, much less surpassed, in the whole history of the modern stage. These two were the great figures of the Victorian age, and we may look round us now in vain for any comparable successors.

Ellen Terry's Ophelia was as consummate as had been her Olivia at the old—now demolished—Court Theatre. Many and many a night have I seen her come off the stage and hurry to her room with tears still wet upon her lovely face. Thus moved to tears herself, London's dry old heart yielded itself up to her, and she has held it captive even until to-day, when, old and half blind, her beloved companion in arms long dead and gone, she awaits translation to a happier and better world, where, with her beautiful eyes restored to her, she will, with the pure in heart, see God.

Like all men with kindly hearts, Irving

was always at home with children, and I well remember, I know not now how many years ago, when he came down to stay with me in the country, Ellen Terry being already in the house. We were out on the river when he arrived, and only my little boy of four (now himself the father of sons) was at home, and as we came into the garden we spied the little fellow being carried round the lawn on Irving's shoulder, already fast friends with him.

I did not know that Irving had any enemy in the world until he was dead, and then one appeared in the Press of Vienna as an English correspondent of the paper. There is a class of persons who will hate above all others those whom they have injured, and those who have done them some notable service. I do not know whether this correspondent of the Vienna paper had injured Irving in life, or been the recipient of benefits from him; he can have had no other motive for his enmity. He said that Irving ran his theatre with the pecuniary help of romantic old ladies (the inference being obviously directed to Lady Burdett Coutts) and that

he had importuned the authorities to get himself made a knight. Fortunately a correspondent was able at once in *The Times* and *Morning Post* to dissipate the accusation concerning the knighthood, with proof that Irving, so far from asking for it, had refused it when it was privately offered him by Mr. Gladstone, and only accepted it when Lord Rosebery had first sent his name to the Queen, not being aware of the former private negotiations, and then informed him that he had done so, thus rendering a refusal impossible without discourtesy to the Queen herself; and Mr. Burdett Coutts in an ensuing letter to the Press demolished the other ridiculous suggestion.

How strange it seems that some men are so constituted that they never seem so happy as when they are inflicting pain on others. They should remember what Cardinal Newman once said, that "it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain."

For my part, I think it better to be kindly disposed, think the best one can of others,

and not spread about nasty stories of people when they are alive and malignant mendacities about them when they are dead. This will harm nobody and do much to ensure our own peace.

For many years I had the pleasure—and a great pleasure it really was—of being on very friendly terms with Sir Herbert Tree. He was a challenging and delightful companion, and it may be said of him that acting was only one of his accomplishments. I often had supper with him up in what he called “the Dome” over His Majesty’s Theatre, and I had to be wide awake to keep pace with his racy wit and subtle innuendo. As an actor-manager he seemed to me to be without jealousy of his fellow players, and to be ready always to give them full opportunity if they could take it. He watched them at their work with as much appreciation as criticism, and once during the run of *Henry VIII.*, when I was standing with him in the wings watching one of the scenes in which Wolsey did not appear, he suddenly said to me, “You used to be the dramatic critic on the——. What do you think

of that fellow? " indicating one of his company.

" He wears his clothes better than anyone I have ever seen in Shakespeare," I answered, and Tree seemed so delighted with this remark that he exclaimed, " I'll tell him so. You're quite right ; he does look and move as if he had really lived in those things all his life."

On the whole, his production of *Henry VIII.* seemed to me even superior to that at the Lyceum. Tree himself was very good, though not perhaps quite equal to Irving as Wolsey, but undoubtedly Arthur Bourchier's King Henry VIII. was a most original and fascinating rendering of the part, played with far more ability and insight than the excellent Will Terris could command at the Lyceum, while the Ann Boleyn of Miss Cowen was extremely clever.

Tree was a consistent upholder of the wholesome and sane drama, and refused to be dragged after Ibsen, whose plays he said made him hold his nostrils, or after every play of Maeterlinck, whose heroine in one of them suffers from a bleeding nose as a

symptom of love. He departed untimely from the world, and there has been no one to take his place.

Another manager whose death has left a vacant space in London not at present filled by anyone was George Alexander, whom I counted among my friends from the eighties, when he formed one of Irving's company.

In his own quiet way he played many parts with much intelligence and sense of reserve. He excellently represented the self-contained Englishman of modern life. He knew a good play from a poor one, and had the prudence and good sense to live within his means and save enough to render his future secure. He lived a dignified, reposeful life, and was an honour to his profession.

When I look round at the old playhouses and remember their Victorian glories I do not feel induced to accept the present perfectly respectable business done at the Lyceum as anything but a sad descent from the great productions of old, and the camels and harems of His Majesty's Theatre hardly rival Tree's superb representation of Shakespeare.

One of the most generous, disinterested actor-managers of the Victorian times was Sir John Hare. I never had the pleasure of counting him among my friends, but I have often heard from members of the profession of his great unselfishness and chivalry as a manager.

When rehearsing *Lady Clancarty* he had caste himself in the part of the King, Dutch William, but I was told that when Mackintosh read the part at one of the rehearsals, Hare thought he did it so well that he cut himself clean out of the play and gave Mackintosh the part.

I have always thought, when looking back over fifty and more years of the stage that I can remember, that *Olivia*, produced by Hare at the old Court Theatre, stands out as on the whole the most perfect production of a domestic simple play for a small theatre that I ever saw. I think the only survivors of that beautiful production are Ellen Terry and Norman Forbes. He remains one of the ripe knowledgeable players, trained in the old fine school, an authority on all the famous traditions of the stage, himself a

master of all the whimsical parts in Shakespeare, incomparable as Aguecheek and Dogberry, and, with his brother, my life-long friend.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

I HAVE seen the rise of the Salvation Army from its first beginnings up till to-day, and for many years I knew its founder and chief. I heard the last public speech he ever made, and was among those who greeted him at its conclusion and carried away a few kindly words from him which I shall always value.

The portent of the Salvation Army is the condemnation of the Church of England. The vast organisation of the Church, with its hierarchy of archbishops and bishops, its tremendous endowments, its glorious cathedrals, its countless churches, failed to reach the submerged millions to redeem whom this one man Booth descended into the depths and brought them up with him into a place of decency and virtue. This is only one of the evidences of the failure of the

Church of England to grapple with the evils of the world. Slowly but surely the population is becoming completely apathetic towards the great State Church.

What can be the reason of this decay of power and influence in an institution sustained by an august tradition, and dowered by princely emoluments, stately palaces, decorative deaneries, and rectories innumerable, in many parishes second only in dignity to the mansion of the squire?

I have known very many dignitaries of the Church. I was intimate with Dr. Temple while he was Bishop of Exeter, then of London, and finally Archbishop of Canterbury; I have also been on terms of friendly acquaintance with two other holders of the see of Canterbury. I have also known intimately many other clergy of the Church of England, and have been able, therefore, to watch for and discover what are the dominant interests and thoughts that fill their minds and direct their actions.

As a spectator, interested very genuinely in the welfare of the Church of England, it has always seemed to me that its power for

corporate action and for bringing to bear a combined and potent influence on public affairs has been crippled and rendered impotent by the complete lack of discipline throughout its ranks.

If the archbishop could issue his mandates to the clergy which were absolute and final, disobedience to which could be instantly visited by deprivation or other overwhelming penalties, the whole splendid organisation could move together with irresistible force against evil and towards good.

A Church in which discipline cannot be enforced, and in which, when it is enforced, it may entail a personal charge upon the bishop who exercises it running into thousands of pounds, must inevitably lose the cohesion and unity indispensable for strength.

Booth knew this very well, and with his system of generals, colonels, and cornets imitated the discipline, and adopted the titles, of an army.

Then there is the education of the clergy at Cuddesdon and elsewhere, which seems to project the young priests into their benefices full of enthusiasm for all manner of

refinements of doctrine and elegancies of ritual, but without any mandate to go forth and denounce the manifold abominations of the wicked world and fight the good fight to put them down.

I visited the last Church Congress at Birmingham and watched the proceedings with silent disappointment. All manner of subjects, of no particular moment to the world, were discussed without any very definite conclusions being reached. Papers were read, and were followed by debates as to how modern knowledge could best be reconciled with ancient faith, and as to whether the liturgy should be renovated and its language changed into that now current in the daily Press. But they never came within measurable distance of the great evils of this country.

Cruelty to children, which has called forth a magnificent Society to put it down, which fills every good man's heart with anguish, which is peculiarly repugnant to all who remember Christ's words concerning little children, and therefore should be tracked down, exposed, and denounced by every

ordained clergyman in the land, was not alluded to throughout the congress. The great Society which fights this meanest of all cowardly deeds is managed almost exclusively by laymen, and the Church of England took no part in its foundation.

Mr. Waugh, who founded it, told me that he could not get the Archbishop of Canterbury to help him when he began his crusade, but that, after years of strenuous labour by laymen and non-churchmen had raised the Society to an honoured position in England, the same archbishop wrote and offered to give his name to it as a Vice-President.

Cruelty to animals, which is one of the most sickening wickednesses in the world, was not mentioned in this Church Congress. All decent Christian people have been shocked at the horrors of the worn-out horse traffic, which subjects the poor faithful beasts, who have served mankind till they are too old and broken to do so any more, to a sea voyage to Belgium, during which they not seldom suffer frightful injuries, and then to every sort of cruelty till they are finally killed for food. Would not the Church of England be

better employed in lifting up its voice to demand that these wretched old horses should be spared such misery than discussing the reconciliation of modern knowledge with ancient faith?

All the other dreadful wickednesses rampant on all sides of us found no place in the councils of the Church at Birmingham. The slow murders of baby-farming, the moral degradations of drug-taking, the awful barbarities of stag-hunting, the smooth road to prison afforded by gambling that leads to embezzlement—these and many other terrible evils, all utterly repugnant to Christian principles, leave the Church of England unmoved. *Not the Church army*

Is it wonderful that the world moves on and takes less and less note of the doings of the Church? If they would regain the love and esteem of the good and earnest Christians in this country the clergy should leave their aimless discussion about things that matter less than nothing, and, taking their courage in both hands, come out, though late in the day, and join the great and good men who have long been doing the work of Christ in

fighting these innumerable abominations that flourish around us.

To the present world it matters not whether the Church can reconcile its faith with modern knowledge or whether it decides to tinker with the liturgy in the prayer-book, though some may think the one attempt hopeless and the other vulgar.

Let it but abandon these inconclusive discussions and come down to a grim life-and-death struggle with the concrete evil deeds of men and women, and it then will swiftly win the loving allegiance of all that is noblest and best in the land.

A Church that buried Charles Darwin in Westminster Abbey had better abandon, at this time of day, debating how to reconcile faith with modern knowledge. The ancient forts have been surrendered to the enemy, and the most ingenious bridge-builder at the Church Congress will never effect a junction between the doctrine of the atonement and original sin and the doctrine of the descent—or rather the ascent—of man from a kind of ape of arboreal habits.

The Church having long ago embraced

science, and humbly accepted its dogma that when God said " Let there be light " He really meant " Let there be a tendency of the atoms of æther to oscillate," it is too late now to return to the faith that light, either in the visible world or in the mind of man, is a manifestation of an essence whose nature is only known to Him.

But there is a faith that need not be abandoned, a faith in the things of which science knows nothing and teaches nothing ; a faith in high and noble deeds ; a faith in love, truth, honour, self-sacrifice, valour ; a faith in the splendour of waging implacable war against the withering wickednesses of the world, and against the cruelties and barbarities entrenched in high places.

This is a faith that can still summon the failing heart of the Church and bid it rise from the dead.

This is a faith that can indeed move the mountains of evil and make the crooked places straight.

This is a faith that has, of old time, " made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over."

This is a faith that would give the Church the ears to hear that far-off voice borne down to it through the dim corridors of time :  
“ Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord ; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old ! ”

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE DECLINE IN MORAL PRINCIPLES

ONE of the great changes that I have observed in what I may call the mental affairs of the English nation during my life has been the gradual but forcible subjection of letters to science, which has resulted in a decay of faith, a deflation of ideals, a degeneration of conduct, and a disappearance of reverence for what is good and great.

In my youth the illustrious men of letters dominated the entire world of culture and refinement, and the professors of science were only received into the charmed circles of the "scholars and gentlemen" by a polite condescension. They found their way into the drawing-rooms of the lettered and cultivated on much the same footing as the violinist and the baritone, who were usually invited, not to dinner, but to the reception that

followed it. And, quite apart from society, the general population attended to what Froude and Matthew Arnold and Carlyle and Ruskin and Manning and such men had to say with much more readiness and attention than they extended to professors of physics or physiology or electricity or biology and other branches of science.

All this has entirely changed, and now day by day *The Times* and other publications are filled with the pronouncements of the professors in every branch of science to the comparative exclusion of all other fields of knowledge.

I take leave to doubt whether this alteration in the mental interests of the present generation is really conducive to the advancement of human welfare, and whether the true edification of character does not suffer from it. Even if all that the professors assert could be proved, it does not certainly appear how we should be benefited. I have tried, for instance, with every desire to improve myself, to follow their disputations as to the origin of man, but find it no very exhilarating or elevating occupation! When

the modern biologists and physiologists dispute about the antiquity of our species, when Darwinians uphold and Mendelians and Mutationists repudiate the doctrine of natural selection, when neo-Lamarckians differ from Weismannians as to whether variations are heritable, when one set of professors tells us that organs are the effect of mind, and another set of professors asserts that mind is the result of organs, when none of them can tell us how mind can come from matter, and when all these, with their endless voyages into the unknown and unknowable, lead us nowhither, what do they profit us?

And what advantage do we get by all the interminable discourse Milton describes of those who

reasoned high

Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,  
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,  
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost?

It has all been traversed by the industrious and the dull of the present generation, and will all be traversed by the industrious and the dull that come after us, "about it and about," and nothing will ever come of it. I have

spent hours over learned books written to prove to me that I, and a crab, and a kangaroo, and a sparrow, and a centipede, are all descended from a common ancestor. It may be an elevating and illuminating truth, bringing comfort and consolation to the fellows of the Royal Society, but it leaves me rather cold.

I sincerely believe that it was better for us all to believe in a noble myth than in so depressing a truth, if it be a truth. "And God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

Well, well ! it all happened inconceivable ages ago. No one can really tell us, not even the youngest F.R.S., how man first emerged upon the world, but if I am free to choose my remote origin I know which is the more acceptable to my heart.

"Then I beheld all the work of God that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun ; because though a man labour to seek it out yet he shall not find it ; yea, farther : though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

“ As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child ; even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.”

This old wisdom I think is better for us than the new knowledge. From the great books of the world, from the Bible downwards, we can learn so much that will make us better and happier ; from science we can learn nothing that will elevate character or guide conduct, and character and conduct are what matter to us in life ; all the rest is vanity.

Now I think I see around me a manifest declension of ideals, and degradation of conduct, due to the usurpation of science as the chief interest and occupation of men's minds, and to a decay in the old faith of Christians.

What a distance we have travelled in the loosening of the public conscience since the days of the Parnell commission ! I knew that strange, silent, detached leader, and remember the turmoil which surrounded him over that mean slander. The mere

suspicion that he had written a letter in a measure condoning the Phoenix Park assassinations was sufficient utterly to expel him from politics had he not been able to disprove that he was its author.

But now men who openly are associated with assassinations of innocent people of both sexes all over Ireland, and who publicly proclaim their repudiation of allegiance to the crown, are received as ambassadors and plenipotentiaries in honourable conference by the Cabinet of this country in Downing Street.

In the Victorian times high treason was regarded as something worse than common assault or larceny. Can anyone deny that there is here an example of the lowered standard of public ideals?

Time after time, in later years, policies and measures have been conceded to agitators who have resorted to violations of the law and contemned the arbitrament of the polls. Public blackmail and defiance of the law have gradually usurped the place of legitimate agitation and the decisions of the electors.

First came "passive resistance" to the  
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law of the land ; then there followed the burning down of churches, and of the private houses of perfectly innocuous owners, by women who would not wait for the considered opinion of their fellow countrymen.

And now there is organised murder and terror as a political method of obtaining what is desired. A sinister ascent in malignant illegality : first passive resistance to the law, then arson, lastly murder.

In each case it has been the misfortune of the country that these violations of the sanctity of law, and offences against the dictates of morality, have been quickly followed by the attainment of the objects to gain which they were perpetrated. I think this record of the successful flouting of law and degradation of morals since the death of Queen Victoria will force the historian of the future to draw a comparison between the fine ordered public ideals of the age of the great Queen and the subsequent descent to triumphant disruptive violence, which will redound to the golden era of her reign.

The great moral principles upon which a really noble society must always be based

have been loosened from their ancient foundations, and we are drifting down on a sea of turbulence and terror to some dim and dreadful catastrophe.

A faithless world prostrate before professors instead of before saints will ultimately destroy itself, and reduce civilisation to an obscene scramble between daws and kites for what neither can use with profit if it gets it, and in the contest for which both will be destroyed.

In this scene of moral degradation and political chaos the voices of the modern dancing dervishes are raised to acclaim the present and insult the past, leading men to no new heaven and new earth but to a vacant heaven and a squalid earth.

As I look back at the England of my youth I see it crowded with august figures of saints and seers and poets and painters, all striving to lead the world up towards things noble and of good repute ; I see those in authority respected because they stooped to no injustice and were impervious to any corrupt temptation ; I see the State in the hands of men whose principles were inviolate and whose

honour was unimpugned ; I see decorations and titles bestowed only where those who received them conferred by so doing a reciprocal honour upon their order ; I see self-respect and personal dignity in every walk of life and every class of society ; and a serene splendour over all. Therefore when I look around to-day I feel no shame if I accept for myself the ancient designation : *Laudator temporis acti.*

## CHAPTER XXII

### VICTORIA

I AM no courtier, and do not now attend levées. I abstain therefrom not from any lack of respect for the throne, in defence of which I should always be ready to make almost any sacrifice, but because I have felt no call upon me to join the enormous crowds of those who do attend levées and so add to the fatiguing duties of the Royal Family.

I dare say if I thought that being received at Court conferred any distinction upon those who attend I might very likely wish to participate in Court functions ; it might be very pleasant to be admitted to a charmed and limited circle of the most eminent and select of my fellow citizens ; but as one may buy a washhand-stand from a man one day and meet him at Court on the next there at

present remains no inducement that I can perceive to join the entirely respectable but undistinguished crowds that throng the Court of St. James's.

Nevertheless I have enjoyed the freedom of an ordinary subject to watch with interest all the public utterances and performances of the occupants of the throne, and those have led me to entertain the greatest admiration and affection for the august Queen who was, in a beautiful sense, truly the mother of her people.

The ingenuous simplicities of her innocent and sanguine youth have recently been displayed to the world in a book whose writer, I think, did not intend the intimate exposures to elevate her in the opinions of his readers ; and yet I find in them delightful evidences of the graciousness and beauty of her young mind, that serve to endear her to me in her youth, which I did not witness, with as irrefragable bonds as did her every action and utterance win my reverence, when, old and solitary, she maintained with peerless dignity and stainless honour the greatest station in the civilised world.

Never, never shall I forget the scene at her last Jubilee, as she passed slowly through the roaring multitude of her subjects, far as the eye could reach, down the long way of her glorious triumph, a lonely, infinitely pathetic figure, weeping, weeping, with a touching, uncontrolled emotion, blessing her beloved people, and blessed by them from their heart of hearts.

And then I turn from this inextinguishable memory and am confronted with this latest book about her, and as a gentleman and a man of letters I enter my protest against the whole tone of it. I will give two citations from it and then leave the distasteful subject.

On page 68 the author describes the relations between the young Queen and Lord Melbourne, who was her first Prime Minister. He cannot, even if he dared, suggest that the fatherly devotion of the old politician, and the pretty, affectionate attitude of the girl Queen towards him, had anything in it at which the most evil-minded chronicler could flee, so he attempts to render their relations ridiculous by saying that when Lord Melbourne was being "instructive, delightful,

and affectionate at once " the Queen " drinks in the honeyed words, laughs till she shows her gums," etc.

He may attempt to defend himself for this brutal treatment of a lady by referring to the memoirs of the abominable old Creevey, who had the mind of a flunkey and the taste of a kitchen-maid. But it will not serve. We must suppose that this modern writer belongs to, and writes for, that class of person who shrieks with laughter at hearing Cæsar called " Mr. Julius Cæsar."

I pass to the next citation.

On page 121, after alluding to the appearance of the Queen's children upon the scene, and adding that " before very long another baby was expected," the writer says that these domestic and family delights gradually lessened the influence over the sovereign of the Baroness Lehzen, and increased that of Prince Albert, and then the writer adds these words : " Time and the pressure of inevitable circumstances were for him ; every day his predominance grew more assured—and every night."

This is a stroke of humour which the

writer, I suppose, thought would amuse his readers. I think it does not redound to his credit, or to the credit of those of his readers who are amused by it. I do not myself find it diverting. I find it a remark, of which no writer of the Victorian age would ever have been guilty.

I have no means of knowing how this badinage is regarded by the present King, but I think that its author would be a person of unrefined fibre of mind if he failed to resent such a remark were it made in public concerning his own forbears.

There is a race of men, said Steele, who take a secret pleasure in levelling an eminent character to their own condition, and keep themselves in countenance, though they are excelled in a thousand virtues, if they can make a great man seem common and undistinguished. No man or woman can protect himself or herself against this form of detraction save by remaining throughout life in a condition of obscurity.

I suppose in these days the character of Queen Victoria is despised by our bright young moral anarchists ; her numerous children

are made the subject of derision ; her unfeigned and unconcealed love of only one husband while he lived, and devotion to his memory when he died, no doubt seem dowdy to the war widows,

Who bear about the mockery of woe  
To midnight dances and the public show.

Her fulfilment of all the sacred obligations of a wife and mother are mocked at as " stuffy old domestic virtues " by those whose infidelities have strained the resources of the Divorce Court, and made it necessary to summon to its assistance the services of judges from the King's Bench.

In my youth fidelity in love and marriage seemed sweet and comely, and married women in middle life were content to stay in their homes and cement all the ties of the family growing up round them ; now they think it a disgrace to admit their maturity, are disappointed if they are not daily exposed to the public gaze in the penny picture papers, and frequent the dancing restaurants and night clubs, where

Round and round the ghosts of beauty glide,  
And haunt the places where their honour died.

The Queen stood firmly before the world throughout her long reign for the cleanness and dignity of State politics, and of society as a whole, and for the honour and virtue of the family and the home.

He would have been a bold minister who dared to ask her to confer a peerage upon an individual whose sole claim to distinction was a welcome donation to a party fund ; no such sordid arrangements could intrude upon what in her day was rightly called the fountain of honour.

By her goodness she established the monarchy in the British Empire upon foundations more stable than military power and more enduring than dynastic heredity, and bequeathed it to her descendants as immutable as any human institution is ever likely to be.

To the goodness of the Queen was happily added the literary genius of her subjects, which will render the reign illustrious in the history of the world.

Time is the great adjudicator of character, and time will, I think, establish the name and

fame of Queen Victoria far beyond the reach of the shallow flippancies of this unstable dissipated age ; and in distant years men will look back at the nineteenth century as at a time when an unexampled gathering of the noblest men in all walks of life and all fields of effort adorned one of the greatest reigns in history, and added lustre to the most splendid of mortal thrones.

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